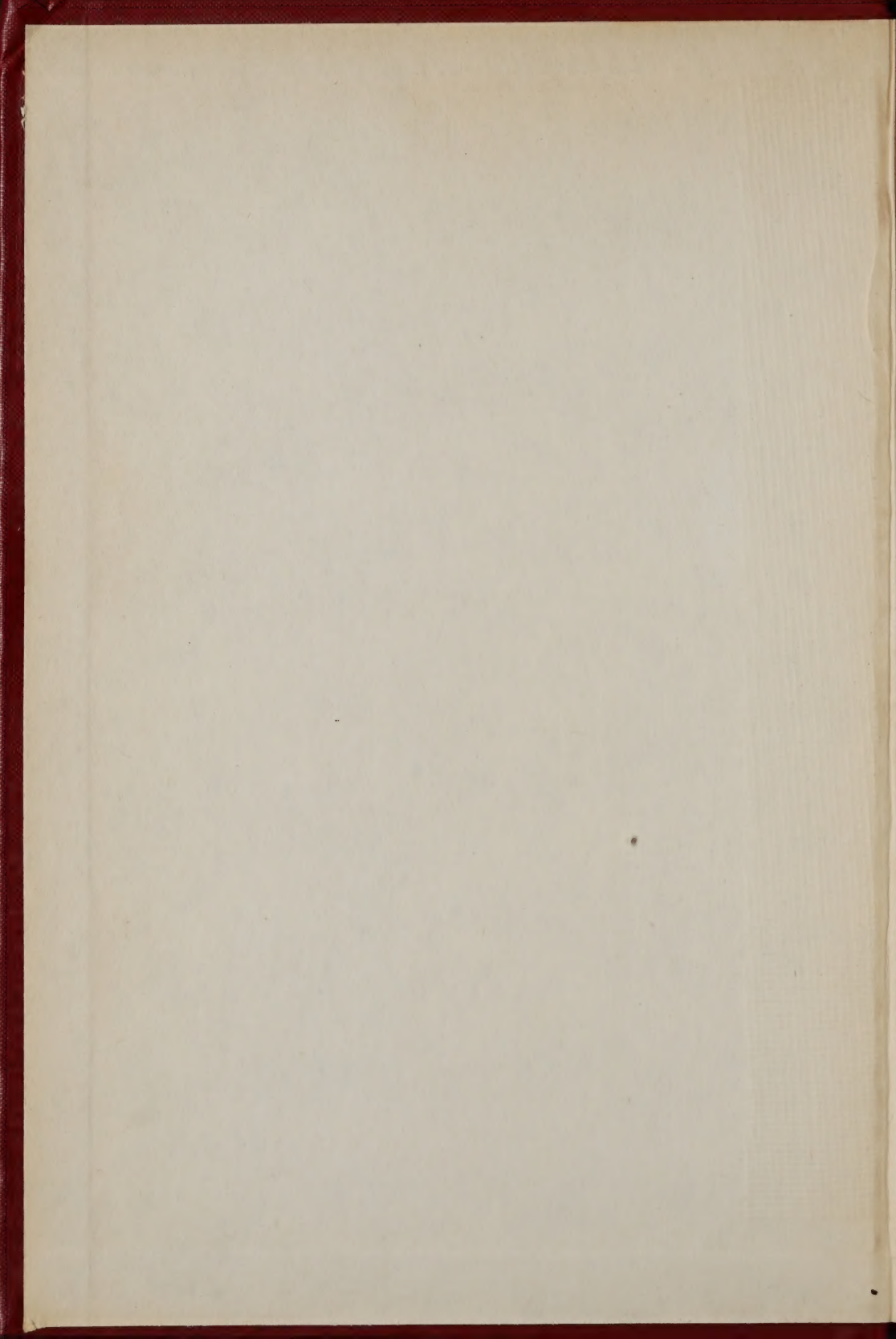


AS LUCK
WOULD HAVE IT

OTTO EISENSCHIML
and E. B. LONG



ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 1833 07362 6324

GC
973.74
AA1EISA

1ST Edition

340966 Civil Wars -

OP83

AS LUCK WOULD
HAVE IT

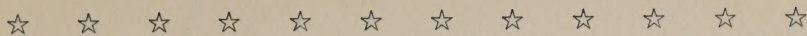
AS LUCK WOULD HAVE IT

BY
OTTO DRANSCHKE

IN
A
SERIES OF
STORIES

THE WASHINGTON COMPANY

REFLECT WOULD HAVE IT



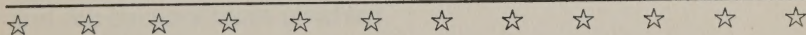
AS LUCK WOULD HAVE IT

*Chance and Coincidence in the
Civil War*

BY
OTTO EISENSCHIML
AND
E. B. LONG

MAPS BY BARBARA LONG

THE BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY
Publishers
INDIANAPOLIS NEW YORK



COPYRIGHT, 1948, BY THE BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

First Edition

FOREWORD

For the want of a nail
The shoe was lost,
For the want of a shoe
The horse was lost,
For the want of a horse
The rider was lost,
For the want of a rider
The battle was lost,
For the want of a battle
The kingdom was lost—
And all for the want of a horseshoe-nail.

These lines were written several hundred years ago, but their essence is applicable to all periods of history. Some lucky or unlucky incident, insignificant in itself, has often led to unexpected denouements, thereby changing the course of important events.

In this book we have chosen examples from the Civil War which follow this pattern. We have especially inclined toward episodes which are connected with colorful, but less-known segments of the great conflict.

All the chapters in this book are part of American history, with the exception of Chapter VII, which is pure fantasy; it, too, however, is based on factual evidence. In the settings of the scenes, as well as in the conversations and thoughts attributed to our characters, we have followed authentic records whenever possible; but where no such records exist, we have used that license accorded to writers which allows them the use of their imagination. So far as we were able, we have conformed to the character of the persons and the circumstances involved.

No *Ifs* of history can be definitely proved or disproved. The best we can hope for is that our conclusions will be found plausible.

In this spirit we are presenting this volume as an historian's holiday.

THE AUTHORS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
1. 1860-1861: In which yellow fever, a delinquent official, miscarried plans and military etiquette set the stage for the Civil War.	13
2. 1861: In which an unknown Southern soldier unwittingly influences the Presidential election of 1868. . .	28
3. 1861-1862: In which a young American chemist turns diplomat and meets an international crisis.	47
4. 1862-1863: In which the successful exploit of a Southern general brings near disaster to his cause.	67
5. 1861-1862: In which forthright dealings turn a former enemy into a valuable friend.	87
6. 1861-1865: In which it appears that the law of self-preservation is the strongest law of all.	105
7. 1862-1863: In which a dread shadow of things to come is cast ahead.	126
8. 1863: In which humor takes the place of grand strategy.	142
9. 1863-1864: In which a dishonorable soldier kills a Presidential aspiration.	161
10. 1854-1862: In which romance triumphs over naval engineering	179

As Luck Would Have It

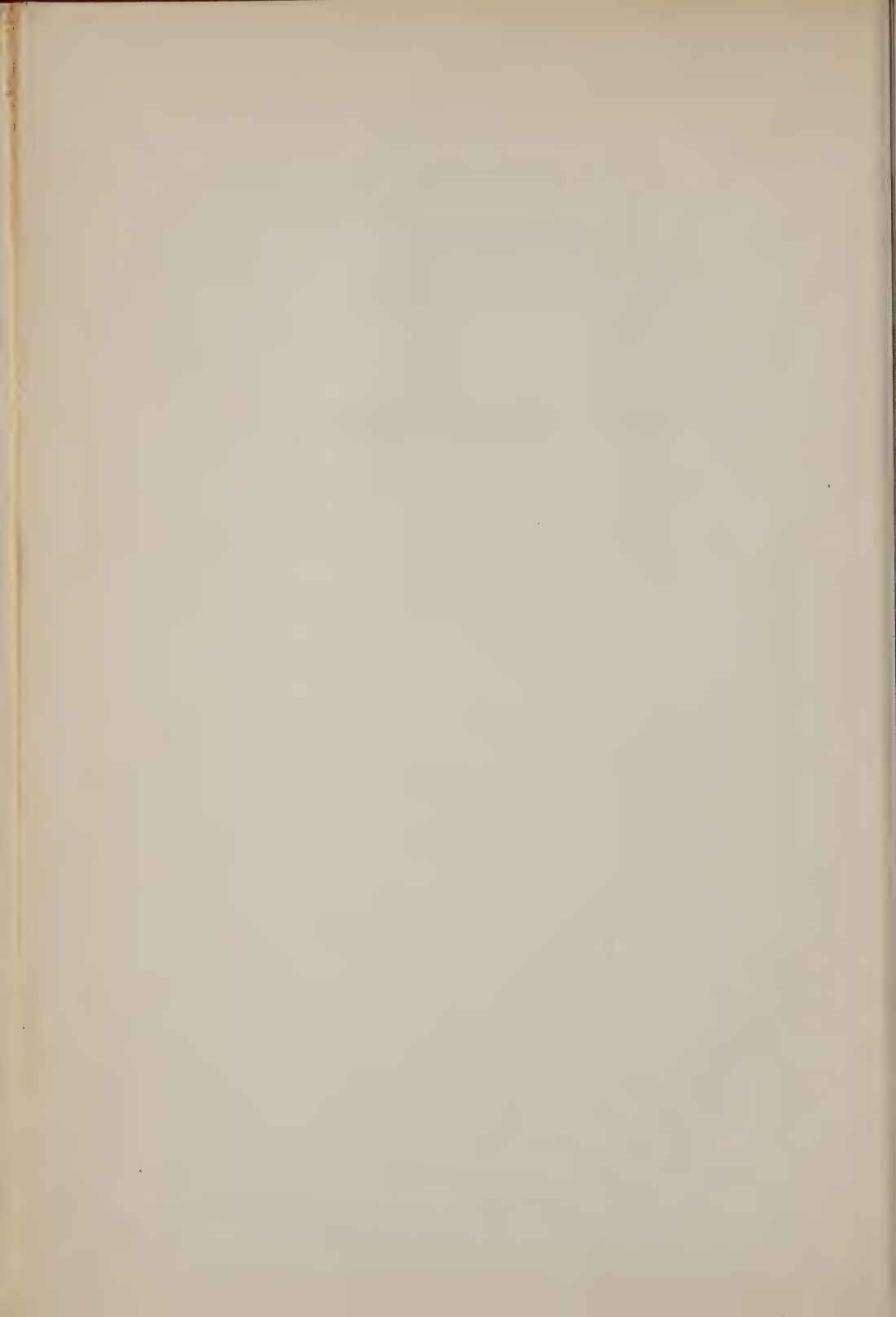
11. 1861-1865: In which peanuts, poetry, sickness and a siege are strangely intermingled.	189
12. 1864: In which it is proved that higher rank does not always go hand in hand with better judgment.	205
13. 1861-1867: In which a dying town furnishes the back- ground for queer happenings.	223
14. 1865: In which a pleasant interlude leads to catas- trophe.	240
15. 1865: In which some trivial incidents pave the way for a great tragedy.	259
Acknowledgments and Bibliography	275

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS ,

	PAGE
1. Charleston Harbor and Fort Sumter	14
2. Battle of Belmont, Missouri	29
3. Stuart's Ride around McClellan, June 2-15, 1862 . . .	69
4. Stuart's Ride around Meade's Army, June 25-July 2, 1863 .	77
5. New Mexico and Apache Canyon	88
6. Beginning and Ending of John W. Doughty's Letter to Stanton	128-129
7. The Mississippi from Vicksburg to the Red River . . .	143
8. Butler's Attempt to Capture Richmond	162
9. Fort Fisher and Wilmington, North Carolina	190
10. Battle of Franklin, Tennessee	206
11. Five Forks, Virginia	241
12. Lee's Retreat from Petersburg	245



AS LUCK WOULD HAVE IT



1860-1861

In which yellow fever, a delinquent official, miscarried plans and military etiquette set the stage for the Civil War

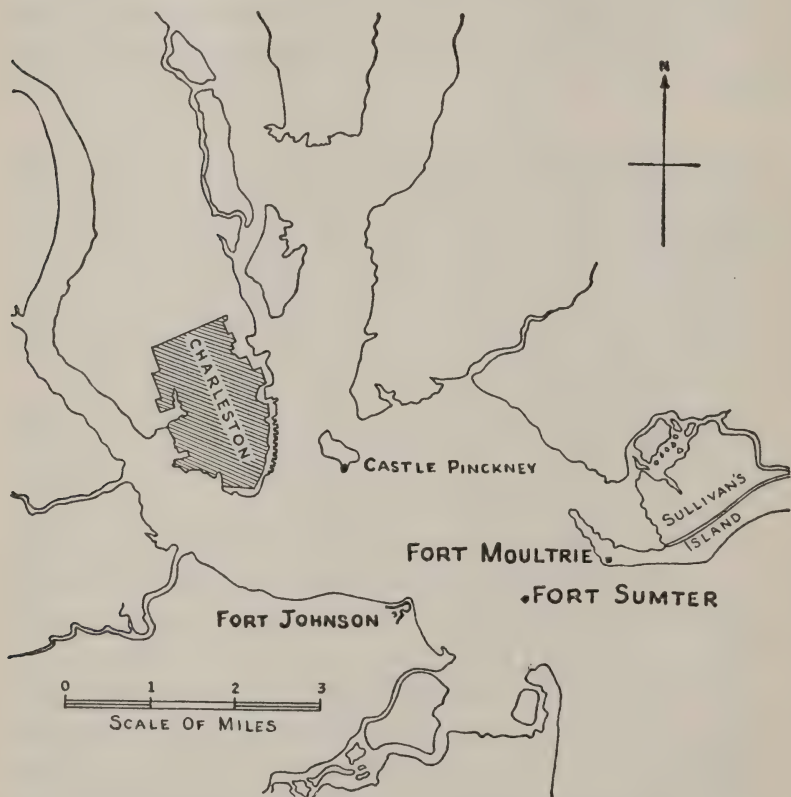
IF YELLOW FEVER had scourged the city of Charleston in 1860, as it often had before, the Civil War probably would not have begun when it did, and certainly would not have begun at Fort Sumter.

The captain of the big Savannah-bound passenger boat paced the deck of his ship impatiently as she churned her way through Charleston Harbor one July morning in 1859. He was glad to leave that pest-ridden South Carolina city behind him. Yellow fever was rampant in the district, although it was not as bad as it had been in the previous year when out of 42,000 of the city's inhabitants 20,000 had been stricken and 727 had died.

The trip promised to be a stormy one; even inside the harbor the waves were running high, which would make the passage of the near-by bars more difficult than usual.

The ship was now steaming through the narrowest part of the harbor, and the captain gave a casual glance to the portside, where old Fort Moultrie was scarcely visible behind the dunes. Then he walked to the other side of the deck, from where he could see Fort Sumter. What were they ever going to do with that jumbled pile of bricks? A few months ago, he remembered, the island on which it stood had been a lively place. At that time it had housed a large number of Negroes who had lived there as involuntary and uninvited guests of the government. An American war vessel had taken

them off a slaving schooner, and Fort Sumter had served them as temporary shelter. Their presence, however, had created much unrest among the slaveholding aristocracy of Charleston, and they had been transported back to their African homes as soon as proper arrangements could be made. With their departure Fort Sumter had returned to its former quiet loneliness. Now the only occupants of the island were an ordnance sergeant, his wife and their two little children.



CHARLESTON HARBOR AND FORT SUMTER

Suddenly the captain's eye was caught by a piece of white cloth which fluttered from one of the fort's walls. What was that? Probably nothing but a new game the children had got up for themselves. Heaven knew, existence on that desolate shoal must be dreary enough; let them enliven it the best way they could. Anyway, the captain had other things to occupy his mind. He was getting close to the bars, and his schedule had to be kept. In a minute or two he had forgotten the fluttering piece of cloth.

The captain's surmise had been amiss. What was afoot at Fort Sumter was not play but tragedy. The ordnance sergeant had taken to his bed with the dreaded fever. As his wife would not leave the island, there was no one but the children to go for medical help, and they were still too small to manage the only available boat, especially in view of the storm which was whipping up the waters of the bay. The poor woman climbed to the top of the wall and waved a large sheet in order to attract attention; but her signal was not answered by the big passenger boat, and there was no other craft in sight. Frantically she rushed into the yard and kept raising and lowering the flag. Again no one responded. In her extremity she finally put the two children into the skiff, placed an appealing letter into the older one's hand and prayed that the waves might spare the little vessel and that the tides would drift it to a populated spot. Both waves and tides were kind to the children. A physician received the message and hastened to the island; but in the meantime the sergeant had died.

The hoisting and lowering of the flag must have been noticed at Fort Moultrie, only about a mile distant, and the apparent indifference of the soldiers there was doubtless due to the fact that they, too, were being ravaged by the disease, and could spare no hands. One of the officers at Fort Moultrie, Captain (later General) Abner Doubleday, reported that his men had suffered severely through-

out the first half of 1859, although the city of Charleston reported no casualties that year.

Along in the fall the scourge abated and when winter set in it subsided altogether. Nevertheless, the government was fearful lest it might return. As a result the War Department sent the commandant of the fort, Colonel John L. Gardner, an uncommon directive. If the disease should again threaten to break out in the following year, he was allowed, at his discretion, to remove the entire garrison to Smithville, North Carolina.

Fort Moultrie was one of the three fortifications which protected Charleston, the principal port of South Carolina, and the only one which was garrisoned. In olden days this little sea battery had been known as Fort Sullivan. It owed its new name to Colonel William Moultrie who had defended it successfully against a British fleet in 1776. The fort was a sleepy military post where less than one hundred men dragged their days through a seemingly endless monotony. A small band of musicians and the unstinted hospitality of the neighboring South Carolinians provided what little diversion they could hope for.

The summer of 1860 arrived and, to the great relief of everyone concerned, the visitation of the past seasons did not repeat itself. In 1860 both Charleston and its environs proved a comparatively healthful place in which to live.

Colonel Gardner made a careful survey and decided that it was safe to let the garrison at Fort Moultrie stay on. Had a new outbreak of the fever made him decide otherwise, had he removed his men to North Carolina, they would have remained there, for Secretary of War John B. Floyd, an avowed Secessionist, would not have allowed them to go back to where they might cause trouble for the South. If no garrison had been at Fort Moultrie when South Carolina seceded on December 20 of that year, Fort Sumter could not have been occupied by Federal troops a few

days later. Not being occupied, it would not have been fired on by the Confederates, and hostilities would have been averted.

The first *If* having failed to halt the approaching crisis, a second *If* now inserted itself into the Charleston situation.

As a Secessionist John B. Floyd, President Buchanan's Secretary of War, naturally tried to further his cause. Had he been a Northern man, or a Southerner of more moderate views, the threatening conflict might have been resolved peacefully.

Up to the summer of 1861, Fort Sumter had been a fort in name only. In reality, it was no more than an unfinished hollow square without armaments. Fort Moultrie, the other outer fortification of the harbor, also was indefensible. No repairs had been made on it for a long time, and deterioration was fast eroding what little strength it once had possessed.

During President James Buchanan's administration, and even before, Congress had repeatedly voted funds for the completion of Fort Sumter. In 1855, \$80,000 had been apportioned; in 1857, \$100,000; in 1859, \$25,000. As to Fort Moultrie, no money for it had been allotted since 1855, and then the appropriation amounted to only \$5,000. The year 1860 saw it in a condition which could be described either as deplorable or as ridiculous, depending on one's point of view. The sea walls were cracked to such an extent that men and even boys could climb them by means of these crevices. Sand dunes had piled up around the walls to a height which would have enabled artillery placed on them to force the immediate surrender of the garrison. From the water-side a few shots would have been sufficient to demolish the ramparts; from the land side they could have been stormed with ease. Looking at Fort Moultrie and Fort Sumter at that time, a military visitor would have thrown up his hands in astonishment and dismay at what constituted the outer defenses of Charleston Harbor.

Yet, this neglect was not without some justification. What foreign power would want to attack Charleston? The United States was at peace with the world and from all appearances no change in the situation was in sight. Why then worry about forts, garrisons and armaments?

This state of affairs might have continued indefinitely had not internal politics come into play. At the beginning of September 1860, Lincoln's chances for election looked favorable, and South Carolina was getting ready to secede. Floyd, in his anxiety to do what he could to help the Secessionists, determined to use up the remainder of the money which Congress had voted. He foresaw that if the North tried coercion, Charleston would be helpless against a naval attack, unless it was in possession of the harbor fortifications; and to make these useful they had to be put into proper condition. He expected, of course, that the South Carolinians would occupy them as soon as Secession was an accomplished fact.

Under the pretense that recent happenings in Mexico had disturbed the relations between England and the United States, Floyd ordered Captain John G. Foster of the United States engineer corps to put the two outer forts into good repair. In the late summer of 1860 Foster started work with several hundred men, principally masons, and soon reported satisfactory progress. In November Assistant Adjutant General Fitz-John Porter, who subsequently was to become a major general in the Union Army, made an inspection and found a portion of the armament in Fort Sumter mounted, the lower gun embrasures closed and the main gates secure. The magazine had been stocked with almost forty thousand pounds of powder, and there were on hand seventy guns with carriages, shot, shell and all necessary equipment. In a few weeks Fort Sumter would, if attacked, be able to give a good account of itself.

Work on Fort Moultrie also went on apace, but its new commander was not happy about it. About the middle of November Colonel Gardner had been replaced by Major Robert Anderson, a Kentuckian by birth. Although Southern in sentiment, Anderson was first and last a soldier and as such suspected that this recent outburst of activity at the Charleston forts was not due to military necessity but to politics. This suspicion was soon verified. It was not many weeks before Floyd, by that time again a private citizen, would publicly brag to a Southern audience that as Secretary of War he had done everything possible to give his side an initial advantage.

Anderson protested vigorously against increasing the strength of the masonry and the number of guns, unless his man power was strengthened in proportion. He pointed out that even if Fort Moultrie were in perfect order he could not defend a fifteen-hundred-foot wall with sixty soldiers and a handful of musicians, that neighboring houses dominated the fort and that from their roofs sharpshooters could pick off his gunners. It was all to no avail. Floyd saw to it that the work went on, but that no additional soldiers reached Anderson. His plans called for the capture of the forts without bloodshed.

South Carolina seceded on December 20, but its leaders failed to possess themselves of Fort Sumter, preferring to acquire it by peaceful negotiations. Major Anderson, however, was not willing to await the outcome of the talks in Washington which, in his opinion, could lead to no satisfying conclusion. He knew that neither the President nor his Cabinet had the right to sell or relinquish United States property.

On December 26, six days after South Carolina had passed its ordinance of Secession, Anderson took the initiative. In the gathering dusk of the winter evening he loaded the garrison at Fort Moultrie into three barges and transferred it to Fort Sumter.

When Charleston woke up next morning, it found Fort Moultrie abandoned and Fort Sumter occupied by enough men to make an attack inadvisable. Furiously Floyd protested to Anderson, demanding to know on what authority he had acted; but Anderson coolly pointed to previous orders of the War Department which allowed him to occupy any of the forts according to his judgment. The deed was done and would not be undone.

At Fort Moultrie Anderson would have had to surrender; at Fort Sumter, located on an island, he was well protected. But he would not have gone there had not Floyd transformed it into a fortress strong enough to resist a possible attack by the Federal Navy.

And so, if Floyd had not been an extreme Secessionist, he would not have fortified Fort Sumter; if Fort Sumter had not been fortified, Anderson would not have occupied it. It would then not have been bombarded, the national flag would not have been fired on, and again there would have been no outbreak of hostilities.

So far, two of the contingencies on which war and peace hinged had veered in the direction of war. Yet the spilling of blood could still have been avoided if some unknown official in Charleston had not failed to send off a simple routine message.

The military authorities in Charleston, appreciating the importance of Fort Sumter, had not taken any chances of losing it. Although they were hoping to acquire it by purchase, they knew that Anderson might transfer his men to it at any time under the cover of night. They therefore had two small boats, the *Nina* and the *Emma*, each carrying a hundred and twenty soldiers, patrol the harbor, with orders to stop any seaward movement on Anderson's part. But on December 26, when the Union garrison did embark at Fort Moultrie, only the *Nina* was out, and she not on guard

duty but towing a barge. At that, she came near to discovering what was afoot and almost broke up Anderson's plan. It was only through the cleverness of the Union officers in one of the barges that the *Nina* was deceived. By taking off their coats and hiding their weapons, they created the belief that they were laborers returning from work. It is doubtful that the commander of the *Emma* could have been fooled so easily. The *Nina* had other work to do and was impatient to be off; the *Emma* was supposed to do the watching. Where was she at this critical time?

The *Emma* was lying at a wharf in Charleston with steam up, waiting for her customary daily orders to go out. The time for her casting off had long passed, but the overdue order had not arrived. It never did arrive that evening, and the *Emma* remained anchored to her moorings, while Anderson took Fort Sumter. It was the only night in which the guard ship had not attended to her duty.

Major Anderson had left a small party behind at Fort Moultrie. If any patrol vessels were to interfere, the men at the fort's guns had orders to blow them out of the water; but that this order could have been successfully executed is highly improbable. In the uncertain light of the evening, and even in the moonlight which shone on the trips which followed, the guns would most likely not only have missed their target, but might have hit their own boats instead.

What kept the *Emma* idle? Who failed to issue the usual order to send her out? The answer to these questions has never been made known. Is it possible that an over-extended Christmas celebration had something to do with this dereliction?

All we do know is what one of Anderson's officers, Assistant Surgeon Samuel W. Crawford, wrote later: "The command crossed without interruption, which, had the guard boat been present at

her usual hour and carried out her orders, it would have been impossible to accomplish."

As though reluctant to let the fratricidal strife begin, another *If* arose before the Fort Sumter issue was allowed to come to its fatal ending. If the Southern authorities had suppressed their in-born chivalry, shooting might yet have been avoided; for while chivalry counseled generosity, military wisdom dictated sternness. If the garrison was to be subdued, it would have to be prevented from receiving provisions; had this been done, it would soon have surrendered; if it had surrendered, the Confederate guns would have remained silent; the Union soldiers would have marched out with military honors; and in all probability there would have been no more excitement about it than in the case of the many other forts which the Confederacy had taken over since it had established itself.

Immediately after Anderson's nocturnal coup on December 26, 1860, it looked as though the South would take the correct military measures. On December 30 Governor Francis W. Pickens, of South Carolina, issued orders to shut off all supplies from the garrison. A few days later, on January 8, 1861, the *Star of the West* made an ineffectual attempt to provision the isolated fort; her withdrawal left matters in *status quo*. But on January 9, 1861, Anderson hinted in a private letter, which he knew would reach the South Carolina governor, that he was in a position to close the harbor by use of his batteries. On the same day South Carolina's secretary of war General D. F. Jamison informed Anderson that the state would procure and carry over to him such supplies of meats and vegetables as he might require. To everyone's surprise, Anderson refused the offer which, so Jamison stated, had been made "solely by considerations of courtesy." The Federal commander apparently was less interested in food than in military

etiquette; he insisted on procuring his supplies by contract, as specified by law, and would not accept a permission "founded on courtesy and civility." If he could not procure supplies in his own way, he would go without them. He added that he was at a loss to understand the governor's action, as he had made no requisition that he was in any need of provisions.

Was Anderson really so bound up in military regulations that for the sake of obeying them he was willing to face starvation? Or was he running a bluff of extraordinary boldness? He had only the provisions which he had brought over from Fort Moultrie in three small boats during one night; the abortive attempt of the *Star of the West* showed that he was not too well off. His threat to close the harbor could be made effective only by the firing of his guns, and Buchanan's administration would scarcely have sanctioned such an overt warlike act.

If Governor Pickens saw through Anderson's game, provided it was a game, he chose to ignore its implications. He was being pressed by such eminent Southern senators as Jefferson Davis and James M. Mason not to arouse sympathy for Fort Sumter by starving its garrison and its forty-two women and children. On the morning of January 19, Pickens therefore sent Anderson enough fresh meat and vegetables to last the garrison for forty-eight hours and informed him that this procedure would be repeated every second day.

The arrival of these fresh provisions was greeted with joy on the island, but before they could be consumed Anderson ordered them returned. He was not willing to accept any civility or favor from the Charleston authorities, nor any act of charity. Strangely enough his letter of refusal contained also a request for a favor: he wanted the women and children removed to Fort Johnson, across the harbor, a place of relative safety. This favor was immediately granted.

If Governor Pickens had halted the proceedings at this juncture, he would have been in full command of the situation. He had offered Anderson all the food the men on the island needed and he had removed their families. Anderson's stiff-necked conduct was not likely to arouse much sympathy from Northern civilians, certainly not enough to inspire a popular cry for drastic action. All the governor now had to do, in order to force the fort's capitulation, was to accept Anderson's last refusal as final, shut off all supplies and stand pat.

As to Anderson's threat to close the harbor of Charleston, it might well have been discounted. The effect, if carried out, would have been problematical and would have left the onus of the first hostile act with the North, where it was sure to create angry dissension and might even have been disavowed.

But the great opportunity to solve the problem of Sumter by a justifiable surrender, a solution ardently prayed for by patriots on both sides, was allowed to pass. Instead of grasping it, Governor Pickens let it slip through his fingers. By special arrangement Anderson was allowed to make his own purchases in Charleston, from where they were taken to Fort Johnson, ostensibly for the wives and children of the garrison; but everyone knew they were destined for Fort Sumter.

In spite of the growing tension, this arrangement was adhered to until the beginning of April. At times the people of Charleston, painfully aware of the subterfuge, tried to prevent the loading of the boats, but Pickens threatened to use soldiers for the enforcement of his ruling. The provisioning of the fort went on.

On March 21 Captain Gustavus Fox, a former officer in the United States Navy, visited Fort Sumter on a mission from President Lincoln. Anderson told him that if he received no further supplies, he could hold out on half rations until April 15. He was instructed not to change the size of his rations unless authorized to

do so. Thereupon Anderson, who by this time had become greatly concerned about his personal record, tried to get rid of all laborers in the fort, forty-three in number, in which case he figured he could hold out on full rations till April 8.

But it was now too late for such tactics. Rumors of an impending Federal relief expedition had reached the South, and Anderson was advised by the Confederates that the departure of his labor force would not be permitted. Either everyone left the fort, or no one.

Presently things began to move at an accelerated pace. On April 2, the Confederate Secretary of War Leroy P. Walker wired to General Pierre G. T. Beauregard, who had lately been put in command of the Confederate forces, to forbid all communications with Fort Sumter. He had positive information that a Federal fleet, with provisions and soldiers on board, was on its way to Charleston.

Once more Fate threw an *If* into the path of the onrushing catastrophe. If Beauregard had obeyed this order and stopped provisioning Anderson at once, a peaceful surrender of the fort could still be expected. Then somebody blundered again. Beauregard did not obey Secretary Walker's peremptory order at once. It was not until April 6 that he took the first step in that direction and all he did then was to restrict the marketing for the garrison to two days a week. This, of course, meant nothing in the way of reducing its supplies. On April 7 he finally complied with the directions received, and henceforth Fort Sumter was cut off from the Charleston markets for the first time since January.

On April 5 Anderson had reported that he would have to abandon his post "early next week." April 5, 1861, was a Friday; therefore this would have postponed his surrender to Wednesday the tenth at the latest. As the relief fleet did not begin to arrive until the eleventh, Fort Sumter would have had to be abandoned

prior to its appearance. Assistant Surgeon Crawford gave it as his professional opinion that the garrison could have lasted till April 13, but that by then the men would have been for three days without any food at all. This shows how much difference a few days of shopping had made. As matters developed, the fort was abandoned on the fourteenth, and there was only a little pork left. It seems certain, therefore, that the six days' grace furnished by Beauregard decided the issue. Without this turn of the wheel Fort Sumter would, by force of circumstances, have become an abandoned stronghold and as such would not have been bombarded.

Who or what caused Beauregard's fatal delay in following his instructions has never been explained. His biographer, whose writings were supervised by the general himself, skipped over this phase of the period with a few meaningless words. All he did was to quote an officer on Anderson's staff, who had no first-hand knowledge of what was happening in the opposite camp. No one else apparently either knew the truth or cared to divulge it. All there is on record are the facts: for fully five days, perhaps six, after a stoppage had been ordered, the garrison kept drawing on outside supplies. What they bought meant the difference between holding out and surrendering. If the beleaguered garrison had been shut off from outside markets six days sooner, it is reasonably certain that it would have been forced to strike its flag before the arrival of the Federal fleet. Precedent shows that this would not have meant war.

Curiously, at this eleventh hour, after all chances for peace seemed gone, one more little *If* offered itself to stave off the threatening cataclysm. Odd as it must seem, if Beauregard had disobeyed Secretary Walker's orders completely, not partially, he might have prevented hostilities as effectively as he would have done by obeying them. The Union warships, so the Northern

public had been told, were bringing food supplies to a starving garrison; they had orders to do it peacefully, unless compelled to use force. If the garrison, at the time of their rescuer's arrival, had been prosaically drawing provisions from Charleston, the fleet would have found itself in an embarrassing, not to say laughable, situation. A good laugh was what the nation needed at this moment; it might have dispelled the war fever created by the oratory of inflamed politicians on both sides. In response to Walker's orders, Beauregard could have chosen between three courses: full obedience, complete disobedience or a compromise between the two. Of the three, the first two would have obviated hostilities; compromise was the only course which inevitably led to war, and that is the one he took. And so the last of the *Ifs* which a kindly Providence had thrown into the path of the oncoming slaughter was dissipated.

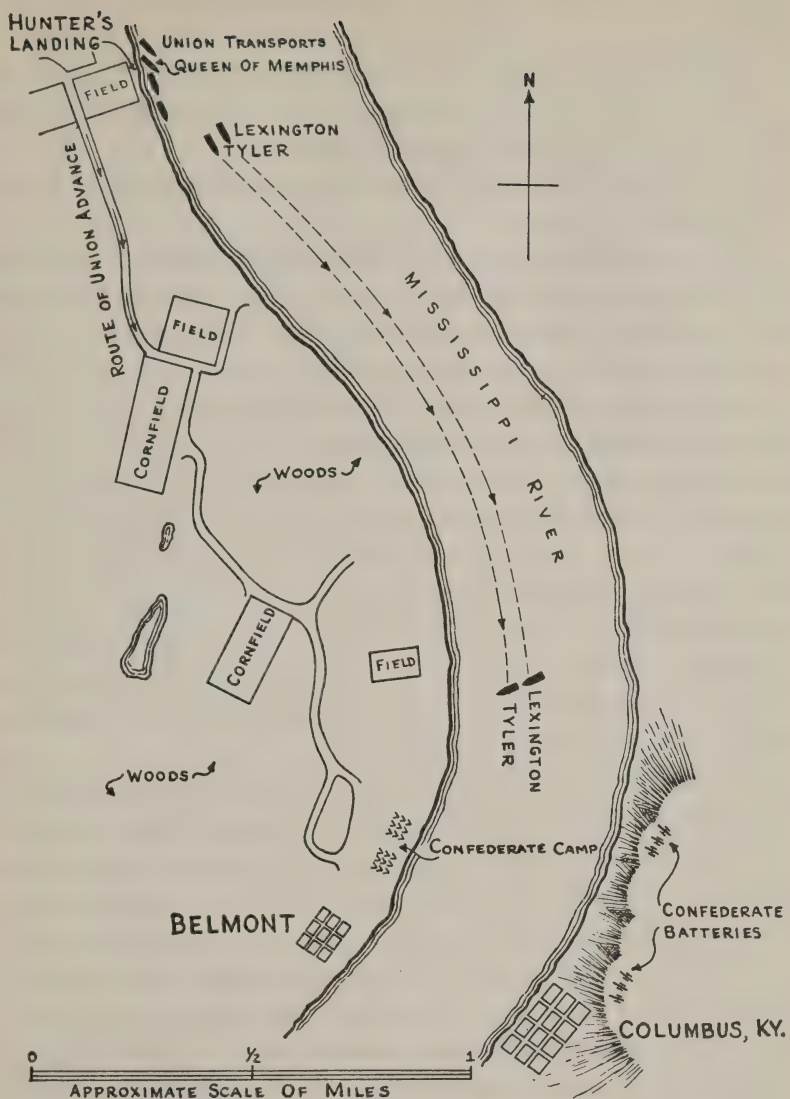
April 11 saw the first shot fired against Fort Sumter, and the greatest and most unnecessary war on the American continent commenced.

1861

In which an unknown Southern soldier unwittingly influences the Presidential election of 1868

IF A Confederate sharpshooter had pulled the trigger of his musket a few seconds sooner than he did, Ulysses S. Grant would not have become President of the United States.

The room of Colonel Richard Oglesby, commanding officer at Federal headquarters in Cairo, Illinois, was a crowded place on September 4, 1861. Not only people from the town itself, but many from the surrounding country had assembled there. Each had come to register a complaint or else ask a favor, and all wanted to talk at once. A sunburned farmer, who had gained the colonel's ear, protested in a loud voice that a Union soldier had broken into his home and demanded whisky at the point of a gun. An elderly woman in a calico dress begged the colonel to trace one of her cows which had strayed and which she suspected had found its way into a soldiers' mess kitchen. An important-looking delegation of city elders pushed its way to the foreground, and the speaker, a red-faced, corpulent lawyer, presented a claim for rental of town property which the troops were using as a drill ground. In all the hubbub no one took notice of a medium-sized, stoop-shouldered man in bedraggled citizen's clothes, who had been introduced to Colonel Oglesby, but had received scant attention, and seemed to be getting impatient. After waiting a few minutes, he strode to the desk and laid down a piece of paper on which he had scribbled a few words.



BATTLE OF BELMONT, MISSOURI

"Well," demanded Colonel Oglesby wearily, "what is it you want?"

Mechanically he picked up the paper and read it. Then he raised his eyebrows, shot a startled glance at the caller and, with a frown on his brow, read the paper again.

I am Brigadier-General Ulysses S. Grant and am ready to assume command of this district.

For a moment Oglesby hesitated in embarrassed silence, while he let his eyes sweep the room, as if hoping someone would be able to identify this odd man who said he was a general but did not look at all like one. He was not in uniform and showed no military bearing. He might be an impostor, even a spy; perhaps he was a jokester trying to perpetrate a hoax. However, after studying the self-styled general for a minute or two Oglesby asked him only one question—how come that he was dressed in civilian clothes? Grant explained courteously that he had only recently been made a general and the uniform he had ordered from New York had not yet arrived. The colonel was satisfied. Somehow one could not help trusting this drab man with the straggling brown beard and honest blue eyes. Oglesby rose from his chair, saluted and surrendered the office.

As Grant walked over to his room that night he smiled whimsically. Events had been moving rapidly of late. Only a few days ago he had been a colonel, campaigning in Missouri, and then he read in a St. Louis newspaper that he had been promoted to a brigadier generalship. His advancement had followed a unanimous recommendation by all Illinois congressmen; but, strange to say, he knew none of them personally, and none of them knew him. His commanding officer, General John C. Frémont, had directed him to report immediately at St. Louis headquarters and had emphasized the urgency of the call by providing a special locomotive for his transport. Grant rushed to St. Louis. When

he appeared at the splendid mansion on Chouteau Avenue, which Frémont had chosen as his official residence, he was stopped by sentinels and gaudily dressed aides-de-camp who spoke in foreign accents. He did not get to see Frémont for twenty-four hours. This made no sense to Grant. But so many other things he had witnessed lately made no sense either. There was the occupation of Columbus, for instance, which he had repeatedly recommended. The town stood on high bluffs on the Kentucky side of the Mississippi, only twenty miles south of Cairo, and was the terminal of the important Mobile & Ohio Railroad, which connected the northern fringe of the Confederacy with the Gulf States. From Columbus the Confederates could throw troops into Missouri at will. A few weeks previously the town could have been had for the taking, but now the Southern General Leonidas Polk was making it his headquarters, and his troops were building strong fortifications.

Grant shook his head in perplexity. Political generals were something new to him. He had never encountered them in his regular army career and their ways were past his understanding. Anyway, he felt tired and it was time to turn in. Tomorrow he would be in command of the post and would see if he could not take some independent action within his own district.

Tomorrow came, and with it came independent action. Scouts had reported that some of Polk's regiments had been moved into Paducah, a town located at the confluence of the Tennessee and Ohio rivers. They were openly drilling, and additional forces from Columbus were on the way. The scouts estimated that within a day Paducah's garrison would be swelled to four thousand men, enough to bar the Tennessee River against an invasion from the north.

The distance from Cairo to Paducah via the Ohio River was only forty-five miles, and Grant decided to beat Polk to the

draw. He outlined his plan to Frémont by wire, but received no reply. From what he had seen at St. Louis, this did not surprise him. He dispatched a second message, saying that he would go ahead unless stopped by a definite order to the contrary. Then, without waiting to hear from Frémont, he put two of his regiments and a small battery on a transport, and when the morning sun rose, the citizens of Paducah saw Union troops disembarking on the wharves of their home town. The Confederate recruits, due to an exaggerated report that a whole enemy army was on the march against them, stopped drilling and fled. A few miles out of town they met enough reinforcements to have annihilated Grant's little force, but the new troops, too, preferred the safety of Columbus and joined in the retreat. Grant left his two regiments at Paducah, but returned to Cairo himself, where he found a message conveying Frémont's belated approval. The few hours by which Grant had anticipated it secured for the Union an opening into one of the South's most important strategic waterways.

Inwardly Frémont fumed. He would have liked to punish Grant for this unauthorized venture, but to do so seemed impolitic in view of its successful termination. Therefore he rebuked Grant sharply for having written a letter to the Kentucky legislators in which he explained why he was compelled to enter their state. Furthermore, General C. F. Smith, who had been put in charge at Paducah, was ordered to report to Frémont directly, a deliberate slap in Grant's face. From now on, the latter was told, he was to remain strictly on the defensive and engage in no further undertakings of his own. Grant took these slights good-naturedly. He knew the strict rules of the army and had learned to abide by them. It was funny though, he mused, how quickly a man like Frémont, who had been only a second lieutenant in his early youth and had been out of the army since, fell into the petty ways of the old-time martinets.

The next weeks Grant was kept busy training the raw soldiers who now came streaming into Cairo in a steady flow. All officers of the old army had been absorbed by other units, and Grant had no one with experience to assist him in the stupendous amount of work which had to be done. He was forced to be drill sergeant, quartermaster, chief clerk and commissary officer all in one, and often worked past the midnight hour signing reports, requisitions and doing other routine work. In mid-September he induced John A. Rawlins, a lawyer friend from his home town of Galena, Illinois, to become his adjutant. Rawlins had no knowledge of soldiering, but in his self-effacing, efficient way was a pillar of strength. By November 1 Grant had twenty thousand men fairly well trained, and was straining at the leash to use them. From the window of his room he could see two wooden gunboats, the *Tyler* and the *Lexington*, which lately had been put under his command, tied up at their posts. Much like himself, he thought. He felt strong enough to take a vigorous offensive, but all Frémont did was to make him send out small and meaningless expeditions. One of them, into western Missouri, had just left in command of Colonel Oglesby, the former commander of Cairo. It was an unimportant mission but, unexpectedly, was destined to make Grant's wish for real action come true.

Oglesby, whose move had been conceived merely as a precautionary measure, had penetrated as far as the St. Francis River, about fifty miles southwest of Cairo, when General Polk decided to send out a force from Columbus to cut him off. As a preliminary step Polk established a fortified camp across the Mississippi near the little town of Belmont. The camp was to serve as an assembly point and was in charge of Colonel John C. Tappan, an Arkansan. General Gideon J. Pillow was to take three thousand men there in order to execute the contemplated movement against

Oglesby. Frémont had been informed of these plans and had directed Grant to have some of C. F. Smith's forces from Paducah demonstrate against Columbus, so as to prevent the Confederates there from detaching additional troops. Grant himself was to go down the river and threaten Columbus from the west and north. It was to be merely a demonstration and Grant had no orders to fight a battle. Nevertheless, he was delighted with the assignment and quickly formulated his strategy. He would strengthen Smith's feint with part of his own army, then get in front of the Belmont camp and menace it. That would effectually keep the enemy from splitting off a further portion of his forces.

On November 6 Grant embarked with about three thousand men on six transports, protected by his two gunboats. The expedition, with Grant's headquarters boat, the *Belle of Memphis*, in the lead, sailed down the Mississippi and stopped halfway down to Columbus. It was a move General Polk could not ignore.

Up to then everything had run in conformity to the program, but now matters took an unlooked-for turn. At two o'clock in the morning Grant was awakened. A scout had arrived with an important message. The Confederates were ready to transfer large bodies of troops to the Missouri side of the river. The threat to Columbus was coming too late. Grant listened carefully, then turned to Rawlins, who shared the cabin with him.

"Rawlins," he said, "Oglesby will be in trouble if these troops of Polk's get away. I am afraid a demonstration won't be enough. In the morning I am going to attack the Belmont camp in all earnest."

"But your instructions, Grant!" Rawlins protested. "You were not told to bring on a battle. Besides," he continued, "some of the men have not had their muskets issued until two days ago, and hardly know how to load them."

"Well?" Grant snapped.

"Don't you think a little more training would be in order?"

Grant's face took on a stern expression. "Listen, Rawlins," he declared. "I know my men are raw, but so are Polk's. Every day we spend in drilling will be used by them in the same way. So what do we stand to gain by waiting? Anyway, my troops are so keyed up now, I could not take them back without a fight. We start the boats off at daylight. We disembark at Hunter's Landing which is just beyond the range of the Columbus batteries. Then we attack."

Rawlins wrote out the necessary orders without further remonstrance. He had not served his chief for long, but he had learned that when Grant spoke like that, it was well not to contradict him.

At the very moment when Grant made this statement, a Confederate captain of artillery was penning a letter to a friend in Natchez. "I am thoroughly disgusted with the service," he wrote. "I don't meet a man once a month who knows anything about military affairs. I have not seen a field officer who can drill a regiment, or a general who can review a brigade. . . ."

Grant seemed to know what he was doing.

In the early morning the boats proceeded to Hunter's Landing. The men had to drag the guns up by hand, which they did with a lively "Hi, hi, hi," while the batteries at Columbus tried out some shots at them, all of which went wild. Soon the troops were assembled in two large cornfields adjoining the river. The open ground was surrounded by dense woods, and the recruits scanned them with thinly hidden fear. How many enemies were crouching behind that beautiful multicolored foliage, ready to loose a hail of bullets from muskets and masked batteries? These masked batteries! No one knew exactly what they were like, or even if they existed, but the words had an ominous sound.

The Confederates, who had watched the disembarkation with suspicion, were also filled with anxiety. Polk suspected that

Grant's real goal was Columbus and had allowed Colonel Tappan only his own regiment and the few troops which had reached him during the night, to oppose a possible onset. Now that Grant appeared bent on striking at Belmont, urgent messages for additional reinforcements flew back across the Mississippi. Polk, careful not to denude Columbus of troops, sent General Pillow with two thousand men to Tappan's aid, raising his total force to twenty-seven hundred. Yet Grant's preparations, he could not help thinking, were contrary to good judgment. Belmont itself was of no strategic importance. It lay on flat land, under the very guns on the bluffs of Columbus and, if taken, could not be held for an hour. Was Grant going to violate the A B C of sound strategy? Was he simple-minded? Or was this a new kind of gambit? With every minute which passed, Polk became more puzzled and worried.

The Confederate camp was about two miles distant from Hunter's Landing, and the march of the Union troops began. A shot from the thickets struck a sergeant in the knee. It was the first time anyone in the army, except Grant himself, had heard a shot "fired in anger," to use the phraseology of the day. The men crowded around the wounded soldier, who held his leg and moaned pitifully. Stretcher bearers carried him away and the advance continued. A few enemy horsemen appeared and made quick dashes at isolated groups, fired a few shots from their revolvers and were fired on in return. The troops noted with wonderment that not all bullets found their mark. Their confidence increased.

At the head of his regiments, on the left wing of the advancing force, rode Colonel John A. McClernand, an Illinois lawyer, who had a large political following and was a personal friend of Lincoln's. To the right marched Colonel John A. Logan, also an Illinoisan, a Democrat who once had opposed the war, but who in

the course of time would turn into one of the South's most ungenerous and unforgiving enemies.

The 30th Illinois Infantry was led by Colonel Philip B. Fouke, recently a member of Congress. When he had departed from Washington in the spring, he and John V. Wright, a congressman from Tennessee, close friends for years, had sadly bidden good-by to each other.

"Phil," Wright had said, "I expect the next time we meet, it probably will be on a battlefield, and I want to ask one favor of you; if you get me or any of my men, I want you to use us well, and I'll do the same by you." They shook hands on that and enlisted on opposite sides. Wright became colonel of the 13th Tennessee and was sent to Columbus.

The 30th Illinois had just pierced a part of the Confederate line, when sixty prisoners were brought in, and questions disclosed that they belonged to Wright's Tennesseans. No doubt they received preferential treatment, so far as it was in Fouke's power. Wright, who also could have been depended on to carry out the agreement, was wounded in the day's fighting and resigned from the army shortly afterward. He had, however, performed one service for his old friend before the bullet struck him. At one time Colonel Fouke had exposed himself. Twenty of Wright's men had lifted their muskets to pick him off, when their colonel intervened.

"Boys," he said, "don't shoot. That man is a friend of mine."

A young officer demurred. "Ain't he a Yankee invader?" he asked.

Wright gave the questioner a reproving look.

"Colonel Fouke," he replied, "is not an invader; he is a distinguished visitor."

The war was still a duel of knights who bowed to each other before they drew their swords.

All that these green officers knew of warfare, they had learned

from Hardee's *Tactics*, and they tried hard to follow the instructions. But the command "Close up, men!" which was a keystone of their lessons, went unheeded among Grant's troops, scattered against their will as they were by the dense underbrush. They had to make their way, singly or in small groups, and at times had to crawl under bushes if they wanted to make any headway at all. The officers felt a deep misgiving. They had been taught to advance in rank—perfect alignment the book called it—and found it not so easy as they had imagined. By force of circumstances, the troops advanced as skirmishers, stretched out in a line a mile long. This was against the rules, but it seemed to lessen casualties. When the Confederate artillery opened up, it did remarkably little execution. Grant smiled with pleasure. He had never read Hardee, neither did he remember how Napoleon had mowed down the Prussian infantry at Jena, when they were marching in column according to the rules of Frederick II; but he had learned in Mexico that the art of war meant winning battles, not parading book knowledge. Someday he would demonstrate that an army could even do what military science considered a near crime—go forward without lines of communication, and future generations would study his new tactics with awe.

Grant was everywhere, keeping the advance going. In several places sloughs and swamps made progress difficult; and where only narrow paths allowed a passage, the losses multiplied. In one spot soldiers had gathered in a small group, and Grant rode up to them. They were looking at two of their own dead. One of them was lying on his back, his wide-open eyes staring into the sky. A shell had torn open his abdomen, and his stiffening fingers were grasping the protruding intestines which he had tried to stuff back into his body. The other man had been hit in the face. His lower jaw was gone, his nose was crushed, yet he seemed to be grinning at his own disfigurement. The soldiers stood around,

gazing wordlessly at the gruesome spectacle. A few stepped aside and vomited. A youngster in a badly fitting uniform suddenly began to shriek, and tears were running down his cheeks. "Mother, mother," he cried, "I want to go home!" Before anyone could stop him, he ran away, straight into the lines of the enemy. None of his comrades ever saw him again.

Grant turned away. He had seen many dead on Mexican battlefields. Let the men look at their first casualties; before long the sight would mean nothing to them.

Meanwhile the *Tyler* and *Lexington* had steamed down the river and were engaging the shore batteries at Columbus in a lively artillery duel. It seemed a reckless, imprudent gesture, two small gunboats against scores of heavy guns. A Confederate officer laughingly remarked that the attack looked like two mosquitoes tackling a long line of hornets' nests. But the Federal craft carried out their design cleverly. Circling around with all the speed they could muster, since a single hit from a heavy gun would have been disastrous, they discharged their own pieces in broadsides, thus drawing the enemy's fire away from Grant's men while they were advancing in the open. When the army was well into the woods, the boats, only slightly damaged, withdrew discreetly to stand guard over the empty transports.

General Pillow had selected the worst position imaginable for his center. The men were standing in close formation, spread over an open field. The "Lincolmites," as the Northern troops were called early in the war, did not enter the clearing beyond the woods surrounding it, but shot from behind trees and logs. The bullets and shells aimed at them were largely wasted. It was not until the Unionists emerged and stormed across the open space that the Confederates' odds diminished.

The fight became hotter. Men fell on both sides, deeds of valor became numerous. The correspondent of the *Memphis Appeal*

could proudly report how an enemy flag was captured. A Tennessee soldier named Lynch made a rush for the banner of an Iowa regiment. He pierced the color-bearer's chest with his bayonet and waved the flag in triumph. A moment later he fell dead. Another private, Vollmet by name, took his place, and also was killed instantly. Not to be outdone, the captain of the company, J. Welby Armstrong, was the next to grasp the flag and he, too, paid for the brave deed with his life. Eventually, however, the trophy remained in Confederate hands, and was carried back of the lines, to be put on exhibition at headquarters.

After two hours of battling, Pillow's troops were forced to retreat to the camp in spite of their desperate resistance, because they were running out of ammunition, only three rounds being left to each man.

The Union troops also had to contend with unexpected difficulties. Many of their muskets were found defective, and each time one of them could not be discharged, the spirit of the soldiers suffered. Several of the men were badly injured when the guns burst in their hands. That is what one had to expect, Grant thought, when an army had no properly organized ordnance department, and crooked, unscrupulous contractors could get away with anything. He tightened the reins of his horse and raced across the field as if to cool his wrath.

With no serious opposition confronting them, the Union forces entered the enemy camp with deep-chested huzzas, while their opponents retreated to the river bank, where they huddled in knots, afraid to move. Victory was with the North and had to be duly celebrated. The officers called for more hurrahs, as they always had done after they won an election. Some, for the first time in their lives, delivered a stump speech in the literal meaning of the word. Their invincibility had been proved. The end of the war was in sight; one more battle would do it. Well-rehearsed

Fourth of July declamations were recalled to mind and made to do service. When the speakers had talked or huzzaed themselves hoarse, their audiences dispersed and, regardless of rank, began gathering souvenirs. Abandoned muskets, bayonets, campstools, even tin cups became valuable relics. Officers and men vied in seeing who could assemble the biggest collection of prizes to show the homefolks.

General Grant, sitting stony-faced on his horse, inwardly seethed with anger and desperation. The whole Confederate Army, its organization gone, its guns seized, could readily have been captured. But his troops were out of hand, and would themselves fall easy victims to a counterattack. He appealed to the officers to help him restore order, but his entreaties met with no understanding. If victories could not be celebrated, what were they for? Grant then grabbed the collar of a man here, a man there, and commanded him to desist. The soldiers only laughed at him. They were intoxicated with victory, with the smell of powder and blood. Grant looked through his field glass, and what he saw made him apprehensive. Boat after boat, three decks high, crowded with men in gray, was crossing the river; some already had discharged their human cargo and were on their way back for more. There was only one thing to do. Entering into the spirit of the hilarious mob he ordered his staff officers to set fire to the tents, then urged the men to follow the example. This was something the soldiers liked even better than celebrating. They scurried from tent to tent, to see who could excel the others in committing arson. In a few minutes the camp was a mass of roaring flames.

Grant had not been wrong in his calculation. The batteries at Columbus, aware that the Belmont camp had fallen to the enemy, began to bombard it with their biggest guns. Shells fell in profusion among the trees and showered branches and leaves on the uniformed rabble. What the commanding officer's authority had

not been able to accomplish, fear did. Silently the men fell back into line. Discipline, forgotten for half an hour, reappeared as if by magic. The excitement vanished as the mob felt the need for leadership to rescue it from an unseen peril. Grant once more was the head of an army.

In the meantime General Polk, having watched the course of the battle from the bluffs across the Mississippi, perceived an opportunity to turn the setback into victory. Instead of ordering all his reinforcements to retake the camp, he directed most of them to creep up behind the steep bank and plant themselves between the Union forces and their transports. The remainder were detached to engage Grant's front and keep him busy while the encirclement went on.

Grant recognized the peril; his buglers gave the signal to retreat. As the Union troops marched back to the landing, the Confederates assigned to the pursuit followed them closely. A young officer, while traversing the field of the day's fighting, observed that of sixteen dead horses lying on the ground, nine were white, indicating that conspicuousness exacted penalties. He too was beginning to learn the practical aspects of warfare.

Grant felt uneasy. He had left only one company behind to protect the transports, and the gunboats were all he had to support it. But against such large forces as he had seen crossing over, their combined efforts would be unavailing. He therefore hurried his little army back at a quick pace. The precaution was well taken, for the company posted as guard, without waiting for orders, had joined in the retreat to the boats, and had been the first to re-embark.

Since morning a remarkable change had come over the men. They were as mature as old campaigners. The sight of dead men, which had created such intense excitement early that day, had become uninteresting. Bodies were lying around singly and in

groups. Some of the men had crawled to the foot of trees, before they died. Their heads were resting on roots and their arms were folded; others lay upon their backs, clutching clumps of earth and grass in their cold fists. Their faces were blackened, their mouths gaped open, showing powder-stained teeth.

One young Confederate soldier, who had entered the conflict with youthful enthusiasm, and who had passed through his first baptism of fire without injury, had aged and was thoroughly disillusioned, for when he wrote a letter to his father a few hours after the battle he expressed his foremost thought concisely: "I wish," he said, "the war would close."

When Grant's army reached the cornfields near Hunter's Landing, from where it had started out, Polk's troops, now under his personal leadership, were in position to stop further progress. As far as the eye reached, the Union forces saw enemy infantry, cavalry and batteries arrayed against them.

The morale of Grant's men, however, was unshaken. They had left the field to the enemy, but they did not feel beaten. They had gone forward when the number on both sides was fairly equal and had come back without important losses when they were outnumbered. For a long time to come, it would be an honor to be called a "Belmont Soldier."

An officer came galloping to Grant's side. "We are surrounded," he shouted. "We must surrender!" He too knew the accepted rules of warfare.

"Must we?" Grant answered calmly. "We cut our way in. We can cut it out again, can't we?"

The officer's mouth fell open. He had never thought of that. Moreover, Grant's dictum had the right ring to it. Both officers and privates understood that sort of language. The impromptu slogan traveled quickly through the ranks, was repeated over and again, and aroused so much enthusiasm that later, when McCler-

nand and others wrote their official reports, they all claimed to have coined it.

"We cut our way in. We'll cut our way out!"

With a loud huzza, the men surged forward. The Confederate officers were almost too astonished to fight back. They also had copies of Hardee in their pockets and had expected surrender. What Grant did was unorthodox, unheard-of. Before they could recover, their position was overrun. The net had been stretched too far and could not be pulled in rapidly enough to bag the Union Army. The transports were filling, and one after the other began to push off. In the general turmoil no one noticed that the commander in chief was missing.

Grant had ridden back to survey the situation and collect any stragglers who might have stayed behind. He was alone, without even an orderly at his side. Sitting on horseback a few hundred yards from his boats, he tried to gain a view of the battlefield, but the huge stalks of corn limited the range of his vision. Suddenly he saw a large body of the enemy not more than sixty yards away, marching toward the landing. The men espied him at the same time. General Polk, who could not discern him clearly and was ignorant of his identity, pointed out the lone soldier to his men.

"If you want to try your marksmanship," he cried out, "here is your chance."

Grant gave himself up as lost. Capture, if not death, seemed inevitable. But he escaped both. What saved him was what his friends called his modesty; his teachers at West Point had called it sloppiness. On this day he was dressed in a private soldier's uniform; his loose blouse showed no insignia of rank. The Confederates refused the bait. If they were going to try their marksmanship, it would be on bigger game.

Grant turned his horse around and slowly walked it through

the cornfield. Once out of it, however, he used his spurs and, excellent rider that he was, fairly flew to the banks of the landing. But there he discovered to his dismay that the last boat had just left and was already some fifteen feet out in the stream. Fortunately for Grant the captain recognized him and ordered a single gangplank laid to the shore, while the general's horse was sliding down the steep embankment. Guided by a sure hand, the animal trotted up the plank and onto the deck of the steamer. A moment later the wheels were turning and speedily put distance between the craft and any would-be captors.

Grant went into the captain's cabin and lay down on a couch. He had had a narrow call and wanted a few minutes' rest. As he lay there he heard the Confederate batteries throwing shells and solid shot after the retreating vessels. Their aim was poor though and the damage done was negligible. Then something within him stirred. The danger was not over; the time for relaxation had not yet come. His place was with the men out on deck. He arose from the couch and walked toward the door, ready to leave.

On shore the enemy batteries had retired under a fire of canister and grapeshot from the war vessels. Only a line of sharpshooters had been left behind. One of them thought the opportunity had come to take a shot at something more worth while than that soldier out in the cornfield. He lifted his musket and pointed it at a cabin on the deck of the last boat. If he was lucky, he would hit the pilot or the captain. With a steady eye he aimed and a moment later pulled the trigger. It was a good shot. The bullet pierced the wall of the cabin, struck the couch on which Grant had been resting a few seconds before and then plowed its way through its entire length.

Grant had not yet opened the door. He cast a glance at the couch, quietly buttoned up his blouse and stepped out. None of

those who saw him on deck a minute afterward observed anything extraordinary in his behavior. He was as calm, friendly and unperturbed as they had always known him.

If the unknown Confederate soldier who could shoot so well had pulled the trigger a few seconds sooner, the casualty list of the Battle of Belmont would have been headed by the name of the late and much-lamented Ulysses S. Grant, brigadier general. The war would have gone on without him, and eventually would have ended in a victory for the North. Presumably the siege of Vicksburg, the Battle of the Wilderness and the surrender of the Southern armies would have taken place in the order named. Some important details of history would have been changed, but not the general pattern. There would have been, however, one significant exception: The White House would never have been occupied by a President named Grant.

1861-1862

*In which a young American chemist turns diplomat and
meets an international crisis*

IF THE research work of an American chemist had not been interrupted in 1857, England probably would have declared war on the United States in the Christmas week of 1861.

At his workbench in a well-equipped laboratory a young chemist wiped the perspiration from his face and started whistling a merry tune. Then he walked into his office, eased his lanky, big-boned frame of six-foot-two into a chair and stared dreamily through the window. The great experiment had at last succeeded. It seemed too good to be true. He, Lammot du Pont, of Wilmington, Delaware, in the year of our Lord 1857, had perfected a new blasting powder. The scope of his discovery was so immense that even a gray-haired man might have felt dizzy. And Lammot was only twenty-six years old.

Ever since powder had been invented, it had been made by mixing small portions of sulphur and charcoal with saltpeter, the latter a compound known to chemistry as potassium nitrate. The bulk of saltpeter was being furnished by India, then a British colony, thus allowing England to exercise complete control over the world's supplies. As Americans, the Du Ponts could not overlook this drawback; but there was something else about these deposits which was undesirable: after some three hundred years of exploitation they were dwindling appreciably. As a consequence, the price of saltpeter kept rising, while its quality steadily deterior-

ated. It was particularly irritating that great stores of a similar compound, sodium nitrate, had been laid bare in Peru and Chile some fifty years before. The hopes, however, which this discovery had raised among American manufacturers had been quickly dissipated, for powder made from Chilean nitrate soon became damp, and in that condition refused to ignite. It also contained certain impurities, difficult to remove, which militated against its use. Hence, for all practical purposes, the great deposits of nitrates in South America were as useless to the powder industry as was common table salt.

Now young Du Pont had accomplished the seemingly impossible. He had perfected a process which permitted the elimination of Indian saltpeter in the manufacture of blasting powders. As these constituted the chief product of the powder industry, the achievement would bring profits and new honor to a family whose name was already becoming famous in American business history.

Lammot's own rise had been rapid. Born in 1831, he was the second son of Alfred Victor du Pont. He studied chemistry at the University of Pennsylvania, from which he was graduated at the age of eighteen. He had then entered the employ of the Du Pont Company's powder mills where, under the supervision of two uncles and an older brother, he advanced quickly to the position of research director. The Du Pont family had a clever way of utilizing the talents of its members where they could serve to the best advantage of all. Lammont was given free rein in exercising his chemical ingenuity. Nothing else could have made him so happy.

On May 10, 1857, the new process, the first incisive improvement in the manufacture of blasting powder in hundreds of years, was patented and the product put on the market. It soon became exceedingly popular. Soda powder, as it was called by the trade, captured a large part of the domestic and foreign field. The Du Ponts had to build one new mill after another to satisfy the ever-

growing demand. Their output doubled, then quadrupled. Soda powder became a household word on two continents.

One important invention might have been considered enough glory for an ordinary young man, but Lammot was not an ordinary young man. Glowing with health, ambitious and restless, he began to look around for new problems to conquer. Without pause, he got ready to take on a new task, one which was a logical sequence to the one he had just finished.

Soda powder, excellent as it was for blasting, could not be used in firearms because it lacked the required propelling power. Lammot decided to make it work and free the Du Pont Company—and incidentally the American armed forces—from British export regulations. But he was not destined to carry out his plan in the immediate future. The Crimean War had just come to a close, and his uncle Henry, the directing genius of the firm, sent him abroad to study what changes in the art of powder-making the great conflict might have brought about. When Lammot returned, other matters demanding his attention crowded the project from his mind and before he could devote his time to it the Civil War broke out. As a result, he did not succeed in making Chilean soda nitrate applicable to gunpowder until 1863.

Due to a change in administration and other causes, the North was unprepared for the war when it came. That did not appear to matter too much; few believed it would last long, and all preparations were made with an early ending in mind. Lincoln's reckoning was no better than that of the masses, or he would not have called for ninety-day volunteers. Simon Cameron, the Pennsylvania politician in charge of the War Department, occupied his mind with matters of greater benefit to his friends than to his country and gave little thought to the probable length of the bloody contest. If anyone had mentioned the word stock-piling to him, which no one did, he would not have understood, let alone heeded it.

Yet, even the most incompetent war minister should have known that without an assured supply of gunpowder the armies were as impotent as if they had been sent out without rifles or bullets. He also should have known that gunpowder could not be made without saltpeter. However, in the prevailing welter of confusion and greed, neither he nor any one else worried about this chink in the Northern armor. It was not a subject which lent itself to flag-waving and patriotic oratory.

The Confederacy, its own ill-qualified War Department notwithstanding, found itself in a more favorable position than the North, for natural deposits of saltpeter existed in the caverns of Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, Arkansas and Texas. To be sure, they were not extensive, but at least they were there. The Union states, on the other hand, had no deposits at all and, if deprived of imports from India, would have to resort to the ancient method of producing saltpeter from compost heaps, where vegetable and animal refuse containing nitrogen, such as sweepings from slaughterhouses, urine, etc., were collected into piles and mixed with limestone and ashes. After decomposition was completed, these heaps had to be leached with water, the liquor evaporated and the saltpeter crystallized. But even this antiquated and cumbersome method would require at least a year to yield results. In the meantime the war would go on, and in war a year may count for as much as all eternity.

Posterity has held Simon Cameron in scorn as one of the worst outcroppings of a system based on political bargaining. Yet this much can be said in his favor: he has given history one of its strangest *If's*. It is a queer story.

The foreign affairs of the Washington government were in the hands of William Seward, a former governor of New York and a man of no mean ability. Seward was nursing one pet idea in his mind; to bring the war to a speedy close. He thought that if he

could make an enemy out of a friendly foreign nation, the North and South would bury their differences and make common front against the outsider. If this seemed a gamble against heavy odds, Seward was nevertheless convinced that it was a chance worth taking.

In accordance with this policy he had, from the very beginning of Lincoln's administration, assumed a bellicose attitude toward England. He had even threatened that country with war if the Confederacy were recognized, a threat which had been ignored. Thereupon Seward's attitude stiffened. To William Russell of the *London Times* he declared that if Southern emissaries were received by the British authorities, officially or unofficially—yes, that if they were allowed as much as to hand in a document—Lincoln would break off diplomatic relations. Charles Francis Adams, the American minister in England, received instructions from the State Department which caused his son to write that Seward's dispatches were so arrogant in tone, so extraordinary and unparalleled in their demands, that he believed the Washington government was determined to fight all of Europe.

Meanwhile London and Paris had accorded the South the status of a belligerent, clear evidence that they were not easily intimidated, but gave no indication what they would do about her recognition as an independent nation. As to Seward, they did not quite know what to make of him. A year before, he had boasted that if he should become a power in the new Cabinet, it would be his duty to insult England, and it was the Duke of Newcastle to whom he had thus opened his heart. This British nobleman had accompanied the Prince of Wales on an American tour and any remark made to him was certain to reach his government. Small wonder that in February 1861, even before Seward had entered Lincoln's Cabinet, the British Minister of Foreign Affairs expected an attempt on the part of the United States to pick a quarrel with

Great Britain, if all other plans failed to reunite the two American sections. After Seward had become Lincoln's Secretary of State he certainly let no opportunity go by to twist the British lion's tail, to use a phrase which then already had become traditional.

As a matter of fact, Seward did not appear to be particular with which nation he started a quarrel, just so it would give him a pretext for an appeal to close the American ranks. He accused Spain of having had a hand in a recent revolution at San Domingo, and warned her that she would be held to account. The Russian minister had committed a slight indiscretion and Seward insisted on redress. When he found that France, Spain and Great Britain were considering a protest to Mexico for abusing their citizens, he submitted a memorandum to Lincoln, less than four weeks after he had taken office, suggesting a demand for an explanation and, if no satisfactory explanation were offered, to convene Congress and declare war against Spain and France. England was not included on this occasion. Perhaps even Seward thought that two foreign wars, with an internal one pending, were enough for the time being.

So far Seward had used nothing worse than sharp words to make England uneasy. In the early fall of 1861, however, he took a step which came close to effecting an open break. On October 14 he issued a circular to the governors of all states on the Atlantic Seaboard and those adjoining the northern lakes, urging them to put their ports and harbors in a condition of defense against an attack from "foreign nations." The only foreign nation in question, of course, was Great Britain. One did not have to be a diplomat to understand that. Rumor also had it that he planned an attack on Canada, in order to make the northern neighbor join the Union by forceful means. In this manner, it was said, he hoped to compensate his government for the seceded slave states.

London could logically draw only one conclusion from Seward's

unfriendly acts: he was inviting a declaration of war. True, the British fleet could have swept the American flag off the high seas and blockaded the Atlantic ports, but Great Britain, Seward figured, would by such action lay herself open to an attack from France. What he had left out of his calculations was that Napoleon III might play his cards to suit himself, not Seward.

The effect of all these moves on the chessboard of international politics was a rapidly growing tension between London and Washington. Seward knew that he was playing with fire, but was willing to take the risk.

It was at this juncture, when peace between the North and Great Britain hung in a precarious balance, that one early November morning Seward received a caller. The visitor introduced himself as Lammot du Pont, and the message he brought paled the cheeks of his host and brought worried wrinkles to his forehead. The United States, Lammot reported, had about exhausted its supply of saltpeter; to be quite frank about it, there was not enough of it on hand to produce powder for more than a few more skirmishes. Before approaching Seward, the young chemist had been to see both Cameron and Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles. What had transpired in these conferences is not known. Cameron probably knew the condition of affairs, but failed to comprehend its import, while Welles most likely shrugged it off and intimated that he could do nothing about it. Complicated as it was by imports from a foreign country, its handling was plainly up to the secretary of foreign affairs.

When Lammot finished speaking, Seward sat for a long time in troubled silence. This was indeed a fine kettle of fish, and it was strictly of his own making. Here he had been bluffing right along against a pair of kings, and now he discovered that his own hand was worth less than a pair of deuces.

Seward's mind, however, was resilient, and in this tight spot he showed keen resourcefulness. The first thing he did was to impose strictest secrecy on Lammont and his associates. He felt certain that no one else knew of or rightly appraised the country's predicament. If a foreign power should receive an inkling of it, the diplomatic game was lost; so would be the war, if the news reached Confederate ears. The Southern army, still elated by recent victories, and lying almost within gunshot of Washington, would immediately take the offensive. The next thing to do was to acquire all the saltpeter that could be bought in England and ship it to the United States. On the face of it, and so as to avoid unwelcome attention, Du Pont would act as the buyer for his own company, but in view of the amounts involved, the government would finance the purchases. Seward felt that the damage could still be repaired, although quick action was essential. Meanwhile he would become more conciliatory toward his European opponents. Since he had been the aggressor throughout, an improvement in the mutual relationship should not be difficult.

Lammont sailed from New York by the next steamer. The strict orders impressed on him to proceed with promptitude and circumspection were superfluous. He knew that everything depended on his efficiency and discretion. No British statesman would be allowed to suspect that the Washington government was a powerless, because powderless, adversary.

Young Du Pont reached London on November 19, 1861, and at once went to work. Within a few days he had bought two thousand tons of saltpeter, which was all that was for sale in England, and also had contracted for a large quantity then on its way from India. He chartered four boats to take the precious cargo to America and by November 28 started to load them. Everything appeared to be going well. Day by day the danger was receding. In a short time the Union would be safe for at least another year.

Then, unexpectedly, the clearing skies darkened, and the clouds gathered denser and blacker than heretofore.

October 12, 1861, had been a murky night in Charleston, South Carolina. Taking advantage of the weather, a small blockade runner, the *Theodore*, had crept stealthily out of the harbor and then shot forth full steam ahead. It carried among its passengers two prominent former Southern senators, James M. Mason, of Virginia, and John Slidell, of Louisiana. The Richmond government was sending them across the Atlantic to serve as commissioners to England and France respectively. Perhaps they could bring about the recognition of the Richmond government, something their predecessors had so far been unable to attain.

The *Theodore* managed to elude the Federal blockade vessels, largely due to a ruse. A report had been circulated that the commissioners would sail on the Confederate steamer *Nashville*, and the blockaders fell into the neat trap. While some of the fastest Federal warships were hunting the *Nashville* all the way from Charleston to the English Channel, the commissioners left the *Theodore* at the Cuban port of Cárdenas. From there they took an overland route to Havana, where they were royally entertained by the port authorities and by friends in the diplomatic set. But amidst all these festivities Mason and Slidell were not idle. Still keeping up the fiction of the *Nashville*, they made arrangements to depart quietly on the British mail packet *Trent*, which was about to start for England. When the *Trent* sailed on November 7, they were aboard. They undoubtedly would have reached their destination safely, if an unforeseen event had not intervened.

It so happened that the U. S. Navy numbered among its sea-going officers a stormy petrel named Charles Wilkes. He had just returned on the U.S.S. *San Jacinto* from a prolonged African cruise, and had dropped anchor off Cuba. Making his way into

Havana, he learned that the *Nashville* was a decoy, and that she had drawn some of the best Federal warships away from their stations. The temptation to snatch Mason and Slidell from under his comrades' noses was too strong for Captain Wilkes to resist. Having learned the time of the commissioners' departure and the course of their boat, he found the rest easy. On November 8 the *Trent*, passing through the narrow Bahama Channel, was stopped by the *San Jacinto* opposite the Panador Grande lighthouse. In spite of indignant protests by the *Trent's* captain and those of the British naval officer in charge of the mail, Mason and Slidell, together with their secretaries, were forcibly removed to the *San Jacinto* and conveyed to Boston, where they were lodged in cells at Fort Warren. The *Trent* was then allowed to proceed on her voyage.

News of this extraordinary happening reached New York on November 16. In a city where good war news, in fact war news of any kind, had become scarce, it was hailed with delight; and when the country read the tidings, it echoed the jubilation of the Eastern metropolis. Boston tendered Captain Wilkes a banquet at which the governor of Massachusetts and the chief justice of the state made their appearance. Congress, in a joint resolution and without a dissenting vote, offered the naval hero its official thanks. Such prominent men as Edward Everett, Secretary of State under Fillmore, Caleb Cushing, former Attorney General of the United States, and the lawyer-author Richard Dana, Jr., tried to justify Wilkes's unlawful act in complex legal terms. The Boston Saturday Club invited him as a guest of honor. One enterprising journalist went so far as to suggest that a new Fourth of July be created to commemorate the exploit. Even Lincoln's Secretary of the Navy, staid Gideon Welles, was carried away by the general enthusiasm and sent his zealous captain a cautious letter of congratulations. Most members of the Cabinet also indicated their ap-

proval. Lincoln himself remained dubious, but did not commit himself; if he condemned this breach of international law, he did not think the time ripe to fly in the face of popular opinion. He probably remembered that when James Madison had been Secretary of State, it was America which had insisted upon the immunity of neutral vessels. Perhaps he also considered it unwise to celebrate until Great Britain had made her views known.

On November 23 England received its first news of Mason's and Slidell's arrest, and four days later, upon arrival of the *Trent*, the report was confirmed by her captain and the guardian of the royal mail. A storm of fury swept across the island. The outrage was condemned on all sides in the bitterest of terms. Adams, the American minister to London, finding himself in a most embarrassing position, poured out his heart to his son: "The leading newspapers roll out as much grey lava as Vesuvius is doing daily. The clubs, and the army and the navy, and the people in the streets generally, are raving for war—the impression is general that Seward is resolved to insult England until she makes a war. They quote what he said to the Duke of Newcastle and of annexing Canada." The Queen's Cabinet determined not only to demand the immediate release of the prisoners but also to ask for an apology. A special messenger bearing an ultimatum sailed for the United States in less than a week. The American government was to be given seven days to make up its mind. If within that time a proper response had not come forth, Lord Lyons, the British ambassador, was ordered to close his office and leave for home, taking the archives with him. In addition, the British government strengthened its western Atlantic fleet, chartered steam transports, and ordered part of the army to prepare for immediate active service. The North Atlantic squadron was ordered to get ready for action, and eight thousand picked soldiers embarked for Canada. Unless America backed down ignominiously, it looked as if

war between the two great English-speaking nations was unavoidable.

The situation was aggravated by the attitude of France. In a letter written by its Minister of Foreign Affairs to the French ambassador in Washington, it was stated that the affair had produced extreme astonishment and that public sentiment was engrossed with the unlawfulness and consequences of such an act. In diplomatic language, this was a thinly veiled threat. The real reason behind it was that French trade was being badly hurt by the blockade, and the Emperor, supported by his people, was ready to help England abolish it. If Seward had counted on Napoleon as an ally, he had misread the signs. England and France combined could undoubtedly have broken the blockade, and this was much more of a menace to the Northern cause than any number of British soldiers in Canada, for if the South could exchange its cotton for guns, no early ending of the war could be expected.

Seward saw all these rapid-fire developments form themselves into a catastrophic pattern. The very foundation on which he had built his diplomatic structure was crumbling under him, due to Cameron's incompetency. For months he had hoped that his prodding would produce the challenge which England now had delivered. But what would have been welcome news heretofore, had suddenly turned into a grim menace in view of the saltpeter deficiency. His position was the more difficult as he could not confide in anyone; even to his closest associates he had to display a cheery smile and a bold front. How to behave toward England presented a still more delicate problem. To antagonize her further was too much to undertake, even for Seward; to show weakness was equally dangerous. After careful deliberation he adopted a middle course; he wrote to Mr. Adams that Wilkes had acted without authority and that the British government was to be so notified. Beyond that he would not go, thus leaving his representative in ignor-

ance as to where he stood in regard to the Confederate commissioners. While disavowing Wilkes's act as a peace offering, he still held back on his disposition of the two prisoners. It was a clever diplomatic stroke.

Lammot du Pont, busy with his mission in London, was watching the recent events with grave anxiety, which turned into panic when a royal proclamation on December 4 prohibited the export of all arms and ammunition. Saltpeter was specifically mentioned among the proscribed articles, and so was sodium nitrate, which Lammot might have taken as an implied compliment had his mind not been filled with more important matters. Here he had four ships of the priceless saltpeter ready to be shipped, and they were being guarded by the military, their sailing prohibited by government decree. Since there was nothing he could do in England, he took the next steamer to America, with the intention of laying the matter before Seward. He may have been worrying whether the Secretary of State, a lawyer-politician, fully realized that at this moment one boatload of saltpeter outweighed ten times its weight in diplomacy.

On December 18, while Lammot was still on the high seas, Lord Lyons acquainted Seward with the tenor of the British ultimatum. A few days later, on December 23, he delivered it formally. This gave the American government until December 30 to arrive at a decision.

In this crisis Lincoln called a Cabinet meeting. The original date had been set for December 24, but at Seward's request it was postponed until Christmas day. It is probable that of all those present only Seward was in a position to appreciate the full seriousness of the situation. From America's potential enemies he had hidden his state of mind behind a mask of brusqueness. Within hearing of the London correspondent of the *Times* he had exclaimed that "... no power so remote that she will not feel the

fire of our battle and be burned by our conflagration." Toward his colleagues in the Cabinet he had to maintain an appearance of nonchalance. But inwardly he must have been close to a nervous collapse.

The Cabinet meeting of December 25 brought a great surprise to Lincoln and his advisers. The fire-eating Seward, who had so long and fervently crusaded against England, suddenly pleaded for unconditional capitulation. He had prepared a lengthy paper in which his arguments were skillfully set forth. His real reason for urging the release of the two Southern commissioners he kept to himself.

The deliberations were lengthy, but no definite conclusion was reached, and the meeting was adjourned in the early afternoon until December 26. Did Seward have a secret motive to delay the decision for another twenty-four hours, although only four days remained until the expiration of the British ultimatum?

He might have had such a motive. Lammot du Pont's steamer had arrived in New York on the twenty-fifth, and the young powder expert was due in Washington the next day. Perhaps he was bringing news which bore on the matter.

No record exists of what Lammot did in Washington. That he was there for a purpose is certain, and the purpose could only have been an interview with Seward. If so, he had nothing encouraging to report.

At the next meeting Seward immediately took the floor. He knew he had to win his case then and there. Only three days were left to him. He presented to his colleagues for transmittal to the British government as masterly a piece of persuasion as has ever been written. Without prejudicing his original point of view, he managed to demolish his own arguments and admit the justice of the British claims. In the end he proposed that the two commissioners and their secretaries be "cheerfully liberated." To his

dismay, the proposal met with unexpected opposition on the part of the astounded Cabinet, whom he had too thoroughly convinced before. Even Lincoln, as his Attorney General Edward Bates observed, was reluctant to admit the truth—the truth being that Great Britain could easily ruin American trade and bankrupt the national treasury. Of the Cabinet members, only Postmaster General Montgomery Blair was in favor of releasing the prisoners. It required all of Seward's suavity to maintain himself against this heavy opposition. But Seward was at his best when the odds were against him, and in the end he prevailed; moreover, he had reason to congratulate himself that he had not been forced to play his trump card by divulging what had prompted his turnabout. This was a cardinal point, for Lammot's ships had not yet left British ports, and the vital importance of their cargoes still was the top secret of the moment.

Lincoln's reluctance to agree with his Secretary of State is easily understood; he was apprehensive of public reaction. But it was quickly shown that his fears were groundless. The *Trent* affair apparently had lost much of its flavor and had already been relegated to the back pages of the newspapers. To keep up the excitement for so many weeks had proved impossible. The Atlantic Seaboard cities, which had been loudest in their cries for war, had sobered up considerably after a break in the stock market and a corresponding rise in the price of gold. They were only too glad to forget the unpleasant incident.

A few days later Mason and Slidell were set free—cheerfully or otherwise—and quietly placed on a ship which the British had provided. It was the small frigate *Rinaldo*, which implied no great respect for the Southern commissioners. Seward and Lyons had agreed to avoid all ostentation, and the little harbor of Provincetown had been selected as the point of embarkment. Eventually Mason and Slidell were conveyed to a larger British steamer which

took them to London. By coincidence the boat on which they were passengers also carried Lammot du Pont, who was hastening across to get his boats under way before something else should interfere with their departure. Mr. Seward now came out into the open and showed his burning interest in Du Pont's mission. The American minister in London was instructed to do all in his power "for the relief of E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Company." Officially the relief was merely of a financial nature, and even Mr. Adams does not seem to have suspected that what was involved was much more than a commercial transaction. Not that the finances were negligible; the saltpeter Lammot had bought was valued at \$400,000.

If Adams extended any help to Du Pont, it was not enough to release the cargoes; but he probably did not think the matter important enough for his personal intervention. Seward had left him in ignorance of the crisis which had revolved around saltpeter, and it is doubtful that he exerted himself in behalf of a mere chemist. At any rate, no mention of Du Pont has been found in the Adams papers. How the embargo finally did get lifted was told by Lammot himself but not until many years later.

The arrival of the Confederate commissioners in England created no sensation. Abroad, as at home, the matter had become a half-forgotten issue. A cooling-off period of a month had made both sides happy that war had been averted. It was to be "one war at a time" after all, as Lincoln had once counseled his hot-headed Secretary of State.

After the tension had been broken, America was ready for a bit of humor. Circumstances provided it, and Seward improved on the circumstances. While Mason and Slidell were still fretting on their way to England, sensing that their role was played out, a detachment of English troops arrived at the mouth of the St. Lawrence River. They found it full of ice, and their commander, probably

in deadly embarrassment, asked for permission to bring his men to Canada via the United States, the country he had come to fight. Seward was not slow to see the comical aspect of the situation and offered to the commander "all facilities for his troops, stores, and munitions of war, without exceptions or reservations."

Once more the lion's tail was being gently twisted, but this time in good-natured badinage. All America snickered. England smiled wryly, with the exception of the *London Times*, which refused to print Seward's dispatch.

Time marched on. Lammot du Pont remained active in the powder industry, and after his success in making sodium nitrate applicable to gunpowder, many more inventions sprang from his creative brain. Later in life he became interested in high explosives, and in 1882 he resigned from the Du Pont Company to become president of a concern manufacturing nitroglycerin. Unfortunately his work soon came to an untimely end. On March 29, 1884, he was killed by an explosion. His body, only slightly mutilated, was found near the building where the accident had taken place, and where he had gone when the foreman reported that something had gone wrong and that he needed expert advice and assistance. Lammot, fine chemist that he was, died in the harness of self-imposed duty, an unsung American hero.

Lammot du Pont left no written record of his confidential mission, but once, during an hour of relaxation, his secretary, George H. Kerr, was given a colorful verbal account of it. Mr. Kerr, who had entered Lammot's employ early in 1882, had become much intrigued by this historical episode, to which his chief rarely alluded, and then only in a casual manner. What heightened Kerr's interest was that from the beginning of his new affiliation, he had been impressed by the remarkable resemblance of Mr. du Pont to

President Lincoln, both in appearance and character. Lammot too was above average height, and a distinct resemblance in the faces of the two men was undeniable, especially as their beards were cut in the same fashion. Both combined natural shrewdness with an extraordinary sense of fairness. More than once Kerr heard Lammot point out to some less-gifted business visitor the one-sidedness of a transaction which would have redounded to the advantage of the Du Pont Company.

There were other points of similarity. "His memory," Kerr wrote, "was infallible to the minutest detail. . . . [and] no man ever left our office with feelings ruffled, for, above all else, Mr. du Pont was fortified with an unfailing sense of humor which he called into play at the first indication of a strained atmosphere. In this Mr. du Pont displayed to perfection the *tournure d'esprit Lincolnnesque*. . . ."

To make the likeness still more complete, Lammot was at all times easily approachable, sympathetic and considerate, without ever losing a certain personal dignity which tempted no one to familiarity.

Many years after Lammot's death, his erstwhile secretary wrote down what his chief had told him during that confidential chat on the *Trent* affair. It appeared that after it had been peacefully settled, Mr. du Pont's troubles were not over, due—so he suspected—to Lord Palmerston's sympathy with the Confederate cause. When Lammot pressed for an immediate release of his cargoes, the Prime Minister assured him that it would be necessary to get Parliamentary sanction to lift the Queen's embargo; but, the young American argued, it had been placed originally by ministerial order, not by act of Parliament; could it not be raised in the same manner, and *at once*?

Lord Palmerston, however, continued to be evasive, and as a

last resort young Du Pont handed the Prime Minister a letter from Seward. "His Lordship read the letter," Mr. du Pont recalled, "and even his many years of diplomatic training could not restrain the fleeting pallor which whitened his experienced poker face." But all Palmerston would concede was a promise to give the case further consideration. This was too much for Lammot. He calmly informed the Premier that he was going to embark for America next morning. He was returning now to his hotel and would be available only until sailing time.

As Du Pont was eating lunch in his room, a plumed flunky came in and announced ceremoniously that His Lordship was waiting outside in his carriage. "I am at the table and will see him presently" was Lammot's curt reply.

And so the humble chemist from Wilmington kept the Prime Minister of the Queen waiting while he finished his meal. The interview which followed was short. Lammot pushed a pen into Palmerston's hand, and the order for an immediate release of the cargoes was quickly signed. Lammot chuckled. "You could have played checkers on my coat tails as I literally flew with this official release to the Custom[s] House before it closed. That afternoon the saltpeter was on its way to the United States."

What the mysterious letter from Seward contained Mr. Kerr never told anyone, for he felt that he could not violate the confidence reposed in him. The matter has remained till today one of the war's minor mysteries. All that he volunteered was that if the contents of the communication should ever come to light, it would place Lammot du Pont in a niche of fame with Benjamin Franklin, for both were American patriots who performed delicate diplomatic tasks with devotion and in a manner true to character.

What was in Du Pont's own mind concerning the affair of which he had become the principal character, he expressed to his

secretary in these words: "I have always thought that, in spite of politicians and incompetent military leaders, it was saltpeter that won the war."

He might have added that saltpeter also nearly lost the war, and further that it was saltpeter, or rather the lack of it, which kept England and the United States from fighting each other after diplomacy had failed.

1862-1863

*In which the successful exploit of a Southern general brings
near disaster to his cause*

IF A YOUNG LIEUTENANT, two years out of West Point, had been assigned to any other regiment but the 2nd United States Cavalry, there probably would have been no battle of Gettysburg.

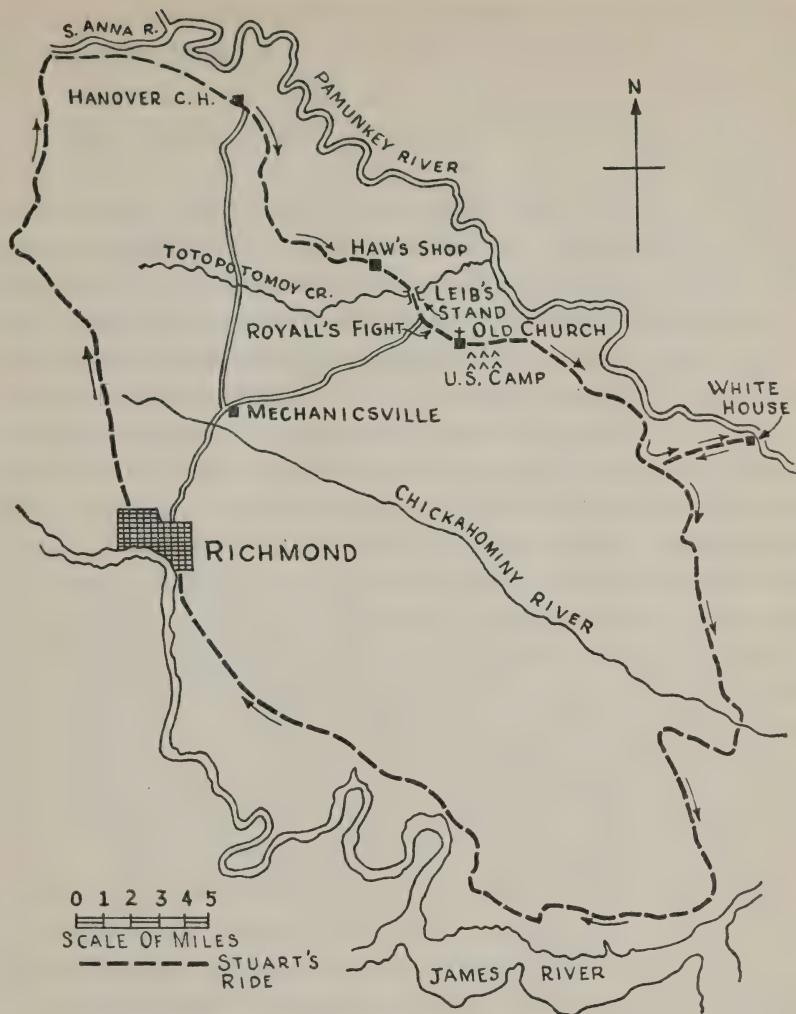
A mounted picket in a fading blue uniform looked at the rising sun and yawned audibly. Relief was due at any moment and he would be able to relax. It was early in June 1862, and on the fringe of this Virginia thicket, amidst twittering birds and green dogwood trees, war seemed far away. A few hundred feet back of him, at Hanover Court House, his comrades must now be getting ready for breakfast. He wondered if there would be enough coffee and bacon left for him. Camp life at this western end of General George B. McClellan's right wing, some sixteen miles north of Richmond, was becoming dreary. The Union detachment of one hundred and fifty men to which he belonged had not had any excitement for days. Well, a soldier had to take things as they came.

Suddenly the trooper straightened up in his saddle and pressed the spyglass against his eye. A cloud of dust, to which he had so far paid little attention, was rapidly growing and drawing nearer. He focused the glass on it and a gasp of surprise escaped his lips. These were Confederate horsemen, no doubt about it; and, to judge by the length of the column, there were more than a thousand of them. With a quick jerk of his wrist the picket turned his horse, sped into camp and gave the alarm. His lieutenant listened

to the tidings with an incredulous shake of his head. A Confederate patrol perhaps, but a thousand men—ridiculous. He jumped on his horse and rode to the edge of the woods to see for himself. In a minute he was back and gave a hurried order to fall back toward the main camp at Mechanicsville, twelve miles to the south. He had given the order just in time. Gray horsemen already were crashing through the underbrush, with a plumed officer on a beautiful charger in the lead. Others were making their way across a swamp in the rear of the Union force to cut off its retreat. It was a question who would reach the crossroads first. Both sides rode desperately, but the Confederates, slowed up by the marshy ground, lost the race.

The Federals, having escaped capture by a matter of heartbeats, galloped off and, strangely, were not pursued. At headquarters the lieutenant made his report to his corps commander, who was loath to believe it. Why would a thousand of the enemy want to go to Hanover Court House? What would they be doing there? If they continued in that direction, they would ride straight into a Union army of a hundred thousand men. If this was a raid, its boldness bordered on insanity. Yet one could never guess what these Southern daredevils were up to. Well, he would show them that they could not make a fool of him. In staccato sentences he issued his instructions. Cavalry and infantry were at once put on the march. They would soon have that little band penned in. Before nightfall a thousand Confederates would be either corpses or prisoners. The general swore gently and sat down to await further reports.

A few days previously, General Robert E. Lee, who had lately taken over the command of the Southern army around Richmond, had decided on a daring piece of strategy. General McClellan, his opponent, was camped only a few miles away, and had the



STUART'S RIDE AROUND MCCLELLAN, JUNE 2-15, 1862

larger army, but it was split in two by the treacherous Chickahominy River, and therefore at a disadvantage. Lee's forces also were divided, but could be readily reunited. What he had deter-

mined to do was to recall Stonewall Jackson from the Shenandoah Valley, where that incomparable leader, by lightninglike thrusts, had beaten one enemy army after the other. Then the two generals together would fall on McClellan's isolated right wing and crush it.

The success of this plan hinged on the speed with which Jackson could join the main army, and that in turn depended on how far the Federal camps extended in the direction of his approach. Would Jackson be forced to fight his way through, or was the path clear? The question was a vital one, and Lee chose his best cavalry officer, the jaunty General J. E. B. Stuart, to find the answer for him. His orders were concise and to the point. Stuart was not being sent out to fight, but to ascertain facts. "You will return," Lee advised him, "as soon as the object of your expedition is accomplished." Of course, if he could destroy a few wagon trains or other enemy property as he went along, that would be all to the good; but he was warned not to hazard his troops unnecessarily.

Nothing could have given Stuart greater pleasure than to head this dangerous mission. Throughout his life, a flavor of youthful buoyancy clung to him, and he never ceased to see war as anything but an exciting adventure. Hard fighter though he was, his face always wore a heart-warming smile. His men idolized him and followed him unquestioningly wherever he led them.

Beneath his light-hearted exterior, however, Stuart was a thorough soldier. He knew that what Lee expected of him entailed no small risk, and he made his preparations with great circumspection. He personally selected twelve hundred reliable troopers, saw to it that they were well mounted, then added two pieces of artillery. But he took no wagons with him; whatever provisions were needed would have to be gathered along the way.

Stuart picked his officers as carefully as he had picked his men. Of his three colonels one was a son, another a nephew of the

general in chief. It was the nephew, Fitzhugh Lee, whose inclusion was to prove more fateful than either he or his commander could then have visualized.

On June 12 the column left Richmond, Stuart joyously in the lead. His jacket was covered with gold braid, and his hat, from which a black ostrich plume waved defiantly, was crowned with a star. A yellow silk sash and gauntlets reaching up to his elbows contributed to the picturesqueness of his costume. Out he rode in a gentle trot, singing an old army song which invited one and all to join the cavalry if they wanted to have fun.

The expedition started out in a northwesterly direction, to create the impression that the Shenandoah Valley was its destination, and that to reinforce Jackson was its purpose. This was bound to stiffen the home morale and might also mislead a watchful enemy. McClellan himself was not likely to become unduly alarmed, but the Northern politicians were certain to be frightened by the thought that Jackson was being strengthened. The Shenandoah Valley, in which that Confederate whirlwind commander had gained his recent victories, was the back door to Washington, and both Lincoln and his war minister, Edwin M. Stanton, were haunted by an almost pathological fear for the safety of their capital.

After a day's ride of twenty-two miles Stuart reached the vicinity of the South Anna River and there dropped the deception. In confidence he explained the plan of the campaign to his lieutenants. They quickly understood why, instead of continuing on their northward course, they were ordered to swerve sharply to the east, toward Hanover Court House. If McClellan had outguessed Lee and was prepared to oppose Jackson's progress, Hanover Court House would be his advance position. His main defenses would probably lie a few miles farther to the southeast, at Totopotomoy Creek, a sluggish stream flowing between steep banks which could easily be fortified.

When Stuart's scouts reported a Federal outpost at Hanover Court House, he set out to capture it, and thereby veil his whereabouts. He was greatly chagrined that his surprise attack had failed. It was a bad beginning. Now a pursuit would be organized sooner than was comfortable, and he might be trapped. Nevertheless, he rode on. His task was not yet finished. McClellan's possible defense line on Totopotomoy Creek still had to be probed.

It so happened that on the same morning, and on the same road, a scouting party of the 5th U. S. Cavalry, fifty men under Lieutenant E. H. Leib, also was riding toward Hanover Court House, but from the opposite direction. The 5th Cavalry formerly had been the 2nd, the regiment in which Fitzhugh Lee had served as lieutenant at one time. The camp from which the party had started was located about twenty miles away at Old Church. Not far from Hanover Court House the two hostile forces came in sight of each other. Due to the formation of the terrain, Leib could not see the entire Confederate force, and estimated it at only two squadrons, or a hundred men. Even so, he was outmatched two to one and wisely retreated to a place called Haw's Shop. At the same time he sent word to his superior officer, Captain W. B. Royall, back at the Old Church camp.

Leib's hasty message was received at two o'clock and deciphered with difficulty. Captain Royall also had his orders; they were to "resist any force which might approach his position." The point of resistance, of course, was not specified, because it was not known from which side an attack might be made. Royall thought Leib at Haw's Shop was too far out and ordered him to join the main force. At the same time he sent out a second company, no more than thirty men, then led the remainder of his command, one more company, to a short distance from camp.

Where the road from Haw's Shop to Old Church crosses Totopotomoy Creek, it passes through a deep and heavily wooded ravine, where a small force could hold its own against larger numbers. Lieutenant Leib was quick to recognize the opportunity. In spite of Royall's orders, he decided to offer at least temporary resistance. Stuart, too, noted the natural strength of the position and hesitated. It was time for him to return. He already had accomplished all he had been directed to do. He had discovered that the Totopotomoy position was not fortified, hence, Jackson's approach would be unobstructed. This gave him his answer, an eminently satisfactory one from the Confederate point of view. Lee needed this information in the shortest possible time and should have been apprised of it at once; but Stuart's adventurous spirit was not yet satisfied. If the enemy offered no heavy opposition, he reckoned there was time enough to advance another few miles.

When Stuart found that the position at the Totopotomoy was defended by a mere fifty men, and those only armed with pistols and sabers, he attacked. In a few minutes he would have done with them. Leib stood his ground for twenty minutes, then retired, wondering why he had received no support. But Captain Royall, his commanding officer, had other ideas. Since the Confederates had been reported as numbering only a hundred men, less than he had, he wanted to lure them on. He put his little force behind a bend in the road, a mile from his camp, and Leib joined him there. Now let those Confederate horsemen come! It would be a pleasure to witness their discomfiture.

Riding full speed around the bend, Stuart ran head on into Royall's troopers. There was no time for deliberation. With a lusty yell the Virginians charged. Sabers clashed, pistols barked and horses reared. The Confederate superiority in numbers was partially neutralized by the narrowness of the road. The Federal regulars acquitted themselves well, but finally were forced to flee.

The fight had not risen above the rank of a slight skirmish, and there were few casualties.

If Stuart now had given orders to turn back, he might still have passed Hanover Court House before the road was blocked, although his margin of safety was becoming dangerously narrow. He was forced to use the same route over which he had come, for both the South Anna and the Pamunkey, fordable under normal conditions, were swollen by recent rains, and allowed no detour.

At this moment Colonel Fitzhugh Lee, who so far had taken no part in the fighting, came to the fore. The prisoners taken, he was surprised to see, were from his old regiment, the 2nd United States Cavalry, and he recognized several old comrades among them. In the lively and friendly conversation which ensued he learned that the Union camp was less than a mile away. He begged Stuart's permission to attack it. Stuart was inclined to refuse; the capture of the camp would consume priceless minutes. On the other hand, it was difficult to resist Colonel Lee's entreaties. Fitzhugh's old regiment! How often that young officer had matched his skill with the saber against his messmates; should he have to forego a duel now when it was not in play, but in earnest? It would look like quitting in the face of the enemy. Stuart wavered. For a short moment he held History in the palm of his hand. Then Fitzhugh's arguments triumphed over military judgment. With a quick nod of his head, Stuart gave his consent. History, undiverted, rolled on.

Young Lee and his troopers rode into the camp, sabers drawn, ready to fight. But they met no resistance, for the Federals, realizing that they stood no chance, had departed. Orders were given to set fire to the tents, and in a short time they were in flames. A large amount of booty, including a goodly quantity of liquor, could have been salvaged, but one unopened keg was all the soldiers were allowed to carry away. Stuart shrewdly had spread a rumor that

some of the tents contained powder. The men left hurriedly—and sober.

When the fever of victory had given way to cooler considerations, Stuart looked at his watch. It was 3:00 P.M., and he frowned in consternation. The few moments which he had been willing to sacrifice in order to please Fitzhugh had been more than spent, and it was now too late to turn back. He was fourteen miles away from Hanover Court House, and the horsemen he had let escape from there had to cover only twelve miles to reach Mechanicsville. He guessed correctly that by this time a large number of Union troops were being massed in his rear. Thus the roads behind him were barred; to the north flowed two impassable rivers, and McClellan's whole army was encamped to the south, the general in chief's personal headquarters almost in sight of the Confederate raiders. Stuart could do nothing but continue east. He would have to ride all around the enemy to reach Richmond again. It was a perilous prospect.

Sitting quietly on his mount, Stuart twisted his beard, as he was in the habit of doing when immersed in thought. He knew that it would take both wits and speed to save him and his command. He must go where no one expected him to go and complete his moves before more than a haphazard pursuit could get under way. He also felt, somewhat belatedly, the weight of his responsibility, for unless Lee received the information he had gathered it was of no value. Yet, another tempting enterprise beckoned him on. Within a few miles, at White House, lay McClellan's main supply depot. Could he destroy it? It was an inviting morsel, and perhaps worth all of his twelve hundred men. But if he went that far out of his way, his capture would be inevitable. This time reason prevailed. Regretfully he contented himself with burning two loaded schooners on the Pamunkey River, and then hurried back to the main road. Even so his danger had increased per-

ceptibly, for by now all the Union camps had been alarmed, and thousands of men were searching for him and his raiders. To make matters worse, the Chickahominy was in flood, and the ford on which Stuart had counted for a crossing was unrecognizable under a raging maelstrom of angry waters. His men had to build a crude bridge, over which they marched cautiously, carrying their ammunition by hand and leading their swimming horses. They even managed to hold onto their prisoners and save their artillery. When the last men had crossed, they set fire to the bridge. It went up in flames just as a Federal patrol appeared across the river.

The hunters were now in full cry, and Stuart had to depend on his wits to make his escape, because speed was no longer possible. His men were almost dead with fatigue; he himself fell asleep and was supported in the saddle by one of his officers. The exhausted horses stumbled forward in a long column, an easy prey to a flank attack which might burst forth from any of the numerous cross-roads. But Stuart was a skillful leader; after a few minutes of fitful nodding he was wide-awake again. Keeping as close as possible to the southern coast of the Peninsula, almost within pistol shot of gunboats on one side and Federal outposts on the other, he eluded his enemies, and even found time to do a little damage here and there. Upon his arrival at Richmond his bag contained one hundred sixty-five prisoners and two hundred sixty animals; he also had destroyed seventy-five loaded wagons, besides the two supply boats.

It is hard to tell what was in Lee's mind when he greeted Stuart on his return. The handsome cavalry leader had violated his orders and ordinarily would have been due for a reprimand, if not for a court-martial. Spectacular as the ride around McClellan's army had been, its results, militarily speaking, were negligible. Moreover, the information which Lee so urgently required had been delayed and nearly had not come through at all.

Whatever may have been in Lee's mind, however, the decision was taken out of his hands by popular acclaim. The citizens of Richmond feted Stuart's exploit as a glorious deed. Flowers were strewed at his feet, and he was entertained like a conquering hero. The name Stuart was on everyone's lips, and even the Northern papers figuratively lifted their hats to him.

In the meantime, the first bitter fruits of Stuart's rashness began to ripen. On June 14 McClellan had written to his wife that some of Lee's cavalry had got in behind him and that he hoped to repay them for their impudence. On second thought he was probably concerned with something more important than the repayment of an annoying debt. McClellan, invariably the prudent general, must have been frightened when he heard how close he had come to losing his depot at White House, protected as it had been by only six hundred able-bodied soldiers and a like number of invalids. What if Stuart had destroyed it? A cold sweat broke out over McClellan's body. Never again should the enemy be given such an opportunity. On June 18, only one day after Stuart had made the official report of his raid, McClellan prepared for the possibility of having to give up his depot altogether. He ordered transports up the James River with enough supplies for his army to make White House dispensable.

It is possible, of course, that even without Stuart's famous ride McClellan would sooner or later have taken this precautionary step. The difference was that he took it sooner and, as events proved, not a day too soon. For by June 26, only a few days after Stuart's return, Stonewall Jackson arrived. Lee at once launched his contemplated attack on the Union army, pried it away from the White House and forced it to destroy the rich depot. In the absence of the James River transports the loss would, at best, have put McClellan in a serious predicament; at worst, it would have compelled him to surrender. In the battles which followed, the

Union army had to live off its wagon trains for seven days, and when it reached the James River its supplies were running low. Swamps were in front of it, and a broad river hemmed in its rear. Whether or not starvation would have made the Union forces hoist the white flag is conjectural. It certainly would have reduced their power of resistance. McClellan might well have offered silent thanks to Stuart for hastening his decision. Perhaps he did.

Due to the transports the Federal army was well provided, and no further consequences might have resulted from Stuart's ride had not the applause which poured into his ears made him long for more. At heart the young cavalry leader was a boy, and the hero worship of his admirers pleased him immensely. His head, however, was that of a mature man. He realized that his raid had been overrated and he became anxious to build his fame on more solid grounds. A raid on a much larger scale would do it. He decided to keep his eyes open.

All of 1862 and half of 1863 had rolled by, and Stuart's ambition was still unfulfilled. True, he had ridden around John Pope's army, but it was Stonewall Jackson who had stolen the show. The battles of Antietam, Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville had been fought by infantry and artillery, with the cavalry doing only side-line duty. A brilliant excursion to Chambersburg had irritated the North, but left only a slight dent in its armor. The Federal horsemen were getting stronger and better by the day. Whatever Stuart wanted to do would have to be done soon.

Then suddenly Fortune smiled once more on the young general. Lee was making preparations to invade the North. Harrisburg, the capital of Pennsylvania, in the very heart of a Union state, was his immediate goal. General Jubal Early had been ordered to lead the advance, with Stuart to screen his movements and keep Lee

informed as to the position and counter-movements of the Union Army. Then he was to join Early at York. The great chance had at last arrived. Stuart was given a substantial force, well mounted, well equipped, well captained. If he were allowed to gratify his wish, he would soon have the papers blazing forth his name; for what he had in mind was nothing less than a ride around the whole Union Army, now commanded by Joseph Hooker, and that in enemy country. It would not only dwarf his own former exploit, but all other cavalry exploits of which he knew. To Stuart's delight, Lee gave him *carte blanche*. If his cavalry leader thought he could be of greater service by riding around the Union Army than by riding on the flank of his own, so be it. He stipulated only one condition: Stuart was to keep him closely advised of the enemy's movements. Nothing was more vitally important, and Lee would trust no one else with that task.

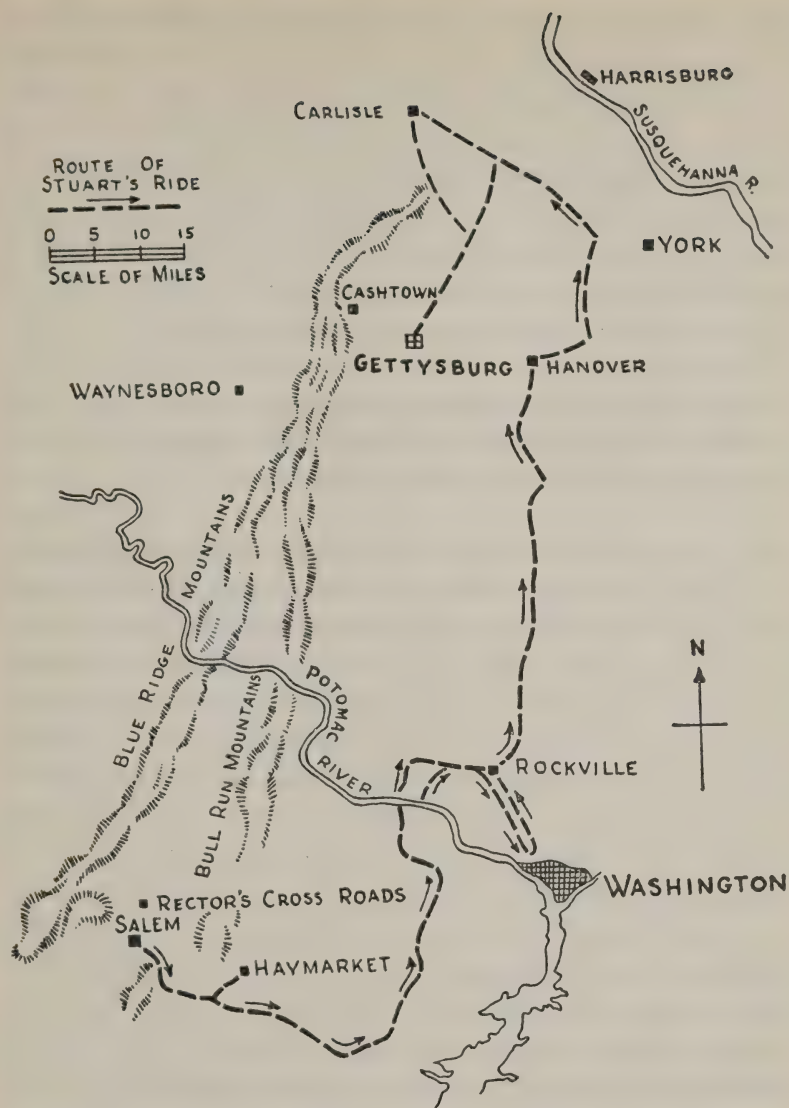
On June 23 General Early was at Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, and Stuart did not receive instructions to leave his camp at Rector's Cross Roads in Virginia until late in the afternoon on the twenty-fourth. If Stuart was to meet Early at York, he would have to press on.

Misfortune, however, at once began to dog his footsteps. Debouching from the Valley into the plains east of the Bull Run Mountains, he found part of Hooker's army on the move north, blocking the way. This made a wide swing to the east necessary, and Stuart was lucky to find an out-of-the-way ford of the Potomac which was not guarded and where he could cross at night. On June 28 he arrived at Rockville, Maryland, far behind his original schedule. Yet he might have made up his loss of time, had not an alluring bait been thrown in his path. Near Rockville he ran into a Federal supply train, consisting of one hundred twenty-five wagons; he had captured seventy-five wagons on the Peninsula; he would begin by capturing one hundred and twenty-five now. It

looked like a happy omen. Just as he had done a year before, he reckoned that a little delay could do no harm. And once more he miscalculated. Some of the teamsters, instead of surrendering meekly, raced for the shelter of near-by Washington and had to be pursued, and several hundred useless prisoners had to be paroled. It would have been far better to let them go and wish them God-speed. Minutes stretched into hours, hours into a night and a day. The tearing up of tracks and the destruction of telegraph wires took still more time. Stuart was too intent on his task to worry very much about it. He came so close to Washington that for a moment he even contemplated a demonstration against its defenses.

Stuart would have helped his cause more had he acted as the eyes of Lee's army, not as its fingers. Due to his delays, large bodies of Union cavalry got between him and Lee. With no communications possible between the two Confederate leaders, both were ignorant of each other's whereabouts. Furthermore, the long mule-powered wagon trains proved a troublesome hindrance, and so did the hundreds of prisoners who were picked up in constant skirmishing. The strain sapped everyone's vitality. Drivers were nodding in their seats, guards were tottering along with closed eyes; one soldier who tried to get into a farmhouse by climbing a fence fell asleep with one foot across. For a time it seemed almost impossible to proceed. Finally Stuart reached the environs of York, but by that time Early was gone, and a hostile populace was generous in handing out false information.

When Stuart finally did join Lee, it was at Gettysburg, and he was astounded to find the two great armies locked in deadly combat. He had completely missed the first half of the battle. In the absence of reliable information such as Stuart had been expected to supply, one of Lee's corps commanders had stumbled into a clash and, almost against their will, both contending armies had



STUART'S RIDE AROUND MEADE'S ARMY, JUNE 25-JULY 2, 1863

been sucked into the bloody vortex. For the price of a wagon train and a few prisoners Stuart had forced his chief to act in the dark. In vain Lee had cried out: "Where is Stuart? Who are those troops streaming into Gettysburg? Is it the whole enemy army or only one of its divisions?" Stuart had not been there to tell him. In a fog of uncertainty Lee had left his almost impregnable position at Cashtown to support troops already heavily engaged at that small Pennsylvania town, where in three days of useless bloodshed the hopes of the Confederacy were dashed to pieces.

If Stuart had not been imbued with his dream of riding around Hooker's army, if he had never performed a similar feat on the Peninsula, if he had denied Fitzhugh Lee's request to fight his former comrades that spring day in 1862. . . .

On a hillside near Cashtown, Lee and his staff were lying under a clump of shady trees. The heat of the summer day covered the earth like a blanket which one could touch and feel, but could not lift. Nobody spoke. Each man's thoughts wandered lazily where they would. Beyond the camp the peaceful landscape slanted gently toward a little town called Gettysburg, some ten miles away. Could it be that these growing fields, these green pastures, should be drenched in blood? What was all this fighting about, anyway? Not one man in a hundred on either side could have answered the question intelligently.

A sudden commotion brought everybody back to grim reality. The sentinel was challenging a new arrival, and a moment later a rider jumped from a foam-speckled horse. The staff officers saw a handsome man in his late twenties, whose blue eyes sparkled with the joy of living. A black plume waved saucily on his broad-rimmed hat. He stepped forward and saluted.

Lee, a smile on his face, held out his hand. "General Stuart! Welcome to our camp. I have been waiting for you."

The officers arose quickly and crowded around the young cavalry officer.

"What's the news?" they inquired eagerly. "Where's Hooker? Where's the Yankee army?"

Stuart shook hands all around, then looked questioningly at his commander. Lee waved his hand, as if to include all those present.

"You can talk freely in front of these men," he said "I have few secrets from my staff."

Stuart leaned against a tree and struck a theatrical pose. The information he was about to impart required a proper setting.

"General Lee and gentlemen," he said, "let us talk no longer of Hooker's army. Some one else is commanding the Yanks now. Guess who?"

"Sedgwick? Hancock? Sickles?"

Stuart smilingly shook his head. "Guess again."

"I bet Old Brains Halleck himself has taken the command," ventured one of the officers.

They all laughed. "Guess again."

"George B. McClellan?"

This time no one laughed. The smile faded from Lee's face, and he spoke up. "Who is it, Stuart?"

"The new commander, sir, is George Meade."

A sigh escaped Lee's lips. The news might have been worse. "Meade is a good soldier," he declared thoughtfully.

"They are throwing up fortifications around Pipe Creek," Stuart continued. "Evidently they are still touchy on the safety of their capital." He went into considerable details, illustrating his remarks with pencil sketches which he handed to Lee. "The Yankee cavalry has become a bothersome pest, and I don't get my information as easily as I used to, but it looks as though Meade was going to stay on the defensive."

"Will he?" Lee asked gently. "Let me show you something."

He spread a map in front of him, while the others stood around in silence.

"We are here at Cashtown," Lee pointed out, "in an impregnable position. It is a better one by far than the one we held at Fredericksburg. If Meade attacks us here, he will lose his army."

"But he may try to flank us to the north, General," a major remarked.

"Wish he would," Lee replied. "We hold the interior line. And that goes for the South, too."

"Suppose he detaches a corps to attack Richmond," a young captain objected diffidently.

"He could have done that a couple of months ago but did not," another officer replied. "He wanted to swap queens with us, if necessary, and those fellows in Washington went into a tantrum about it."

"Gentlemen," Lee declared, "Meade will not be allowed to take men from his front as long as we are so close to Washington. Look," he continued, "if I hold my right hand over the map, Cashtown is my palm. My thumb points toward Harrisburg, my forefinger toward New York. Follow my middle finger, and you'll see it points to Philadelphia, my fourth finger to Baltimore, my little finger to Washington. The moment Meade weakens his army, he can no longer protect all these cities. Meade is a good soldier. He will not attack Richmond."

"But, General," one of the staff officers interposed, "we cannot lie here all summer, can we? If Meade does not attack us, won't we have to attack him?"

"No," Lee asserted gravely, "that's just the point. We can stay here as long as we want to. In fact, the longer we stay, the more supplies we can draw from the rich valleys of Pennsylvania and Maryland and—" here his eyes took on a far-away look—"perhaps

impress Europe most favorably. But Meade cannot remain inactive that long. We are a thorn in his side, and if he does not want to move, the politicians in Washington will make him. But, gentlemen," Lee concluded, "it's time to eat. General Stuart, will you be my guest for supper?"

A few weeks later Meade was holding a council of war at his headquarters. Next to him sat his chief of staff, General Daniel Butterfield, and around a crude table his corps commanders were seated uncomfortably on camp chairs. Meade, never cheerful, wore the mien of a man who has received bad news.

"Gentlemen," he began, "General Halleck has given me definite orders to break the stalemate which has arisen between our army and that of the Rebels. If they will not attack, we must."

A deep silence followed his words.

"General Hancock, what do you say?" Meade finally asked.

"Well, General," Hancock replied, "we have discussed this matter over and over again. Lee's position cannot be successfully attacked in front, and it cannot be turned. Even if we should push him out of Cashtown, he can fall back on one defensive position after another. It is as if the whole damned country had been especially built for him." Hancock kicked viciously at a leg of the table.

"How about using the Pennsylvania militia?" General Sedgwick asked. "Let them threaten Lee from the north and rear, and he will have to weaken his front."

"The Pennsylvania militia!" General Sickles spat on the floor. "Against a hundred thousand Rebel veterans. That would be murder—just plain murder."

"We could send a corps to the Peninsula, and scare Jeff Davis into recalling part of Lee's army," suggested General Howard.

"A good idea," Meade replied with a wry face, "except that the

President and Secretary Stanton will not allow it. We must always march against Richmond on a straight overland line or not at all. You know that."

Five minutes passed and no one spoke. The silence was as oppressive as it was expressive.

"Thank you, gentlemen," Meade finally said. "If there are no other suggestions, I have my orders. We attack Lee at Cashtown day after tomorrow. You will receive detailed instructions in due time."

Two days later the battle of Cashtown was fought, ever after known as the Cashtown Slaughter. Two-thirds of the Union Army were left dead or wounded on the field; the remainder took up their old position at Pipe Creek. England and France recognized the Confederacy. Vicksburg was avenged. Military experts agree that it was the Cashtown Slaughter which prolonged the war for another four years.

The battle of Cashtown, of course, never happened. But it might have—if a young West Point officer had been assigned to any other regiment in the army but the 2nd United States Cavalry.

1861-1862

*In which forthright dealings turn a former enemy into
a valuable friend*

IF A Mexican officer, in the year 1847, had not been acquitted of high treason by an American court-martial, the South might have won the most important battle of the Civil War in the Far West.

On a sultry evening late in July of 1846 two men sat facing each other in a tent outside Bent's Fort, a frontier outpost on the headwaters of the Arkansas River. One of them, who wore the uniform of an officer in the United States Army, was General Stephen W. Kearny. Small of stature but a born fighter, he had served as a volunteer in the war of 1812 at the age of eighteen and had later acquired a thorough knowledge of the West. At the recent outbreak of war with Mexico, he had been chosen commander of the newly created Army of the West, which was to take possession of New Mexico and California. His companion appeared to be a well-to-do and cultured gentleman in his forties. He wore city clothes, but his easy poise showed that he felt quite at home in pioneer surroundings.

General Kearny put down a letter he had been reading.

"Mr. James Wiley Magoffin," he said slowly, as if trying to memorize the name. Then he turned to his vis-à-vis. "Secretary of War W. L. Marcy seems to think very highly of you, sir. He states that President Polk has had several interviews with you and that I may trust you implicitly. In what way do you think you could be of assistance to me?"



"I have lived in Mexico on and off since 1828," Magoffin replied, "and was the first United States consul at Chihuahua. I know many people——" He paused for a moment and smiled significantly before he added, "*And I know them well.*" Then his eyes became serious again. "How many men have you in your command?" he asked in turn.

"Exactly one thousand five hundred and fifty-eight," was the reply. "A lot of them are volunteers from Missouri, and, although they are bearing up bravely, I guess they have gone through more than they bargained for. Even the regulars are pretty well tuckered out. And we are still a long way from Santa Fe."

"Right. You know, of course, that you will have to pass through Apache Canyon, about eighteen miles out of Santa Fe, or else take a long detour? I thought you did. Also that one hundred men can hold that canyon indefinitely against twice your whole force? Well, it may interest you to learn that the Mexicans have some three thousand well-trained soldiers under arms, and they will be waiting for you there."

Neither of the two men spoke for a while, and only the sounds of a busy military camp smote their ears. A young soldier was trying to ride a bronco and seemed to be having a rough time of it, to judge by the boisterous laughter of the bystanders. Other troopers were cleaning their rifles, firing a shot now and then in practice. A few mule drivers were swearing complacently, and their profanity furnished a steady and almost melodious undertone to the general din.

At last Kearny took up the conversation again. "How do you think you can help me?" he inquired.

"Give me a dozen men as an escort, General," Magoffin suggested, "so I can make my entry into Santa Fe in the style becoming an American ambassador. After I have left, follow me slowly with your army so that you will arrive a week behind me."

"And then?"

"Then you can march through Apache Canyon with the band playing 'Yankee Doodle.' There won't be a Mexican in sight."

Kearny's eyebrows went up.

"And how do you expect to work this miracle, Mr. Magoffin?"

The Kentucky-bred Irishman's eyes were smiling merrily.

"Let that be my worry, General," was all he said.

On August 2, twelve dragoons, led by Captain Philip St. George Cooke, trotted out of camp. Magoffin, with the Presidential appointment as ambassador in his pocket, rode along, humming an old ballad, apparently as carefree as if on a summer vacation.

The approach of Kearny's army had not gone unnoticed. General Manuel Armijo, New Mexico's governor, had been fully informed of the expedition sent out to conquer his territory. Ever since Mexico, on April 23 of that year, had declared that it was at war with the United States, he had been preparing for the conflict. On August 8, when Kearny was on the last lap of his journey, Armijo had issued a fiery proclamation, exhorting his subjects to "defend the strongest and most sacred of all causes." Then he added a solemn promise: "Your governor is willing and ready to sacrifice his life and all his interests in the defense of his country. This you will see demonstrated . . . my fellow countrymen."

The fellow countrymen so addressed did not greet this address with excessive enthusiasm. Armijo was a cruel, unscrupulous tyrant who, moreover, was tainted with a slimy past. He had started out in life as a hoodlum, and later had accumulated a small fortune by stealing sheep; adding insult to injury, he had usually sold the animals back to their original owners. His career throughout had been marked by cunning intrigues paralleling those of his early transgressions. Magoffin's trading had often brought him to Santa Fe, and he knew the governor intimately.

Armijo always had been manageable, and should be manageable now.

The newly appointed ambassador and his escort arrived in Santa Fe on August 12, and Armijo received his old acquaintance with open arms. After delivering a voluble discourse on how well his army was prepared to meet the coming invasion, he invited the visitor into the privacy of his palace. There he and Magoffin soon struck a bargain. At any rate, the next day the people of Santa Fe, probably without great astonishment, saw a demonstration of how ready Armijo was to sacrifice his life and all his interests in the defense of the country. He ordered the army to retreat from Apache Canyon and scattered it all over the territory. This done, he packed up hurriedly and fled to Chihuahua. The way for Kearny was open.

Presently, however, a new obstacle arose which threatened to disturb Magoffin's deft arrangements. Armijo's second in command, Colonel Diego Archuleta, was a brave and patriotic officer. He had seen through his chief's machinations and refused to be party to them. But the far-seeing Magoffin had provided against this contingency. A few days previously, and while still at Fort Bent, Kearny had issued a proclamation, in which he took possession of New Mexico; yet he had claimed only that part of the state which lay east of the Rio Grande. Knowing that Archuleta's ruling passion was a hunger for power, Magoffin persuaded the colonel that the western part was a highly desirable prize and assured him that the American government would offer no objection to his governorship. Archuleta succumbed to the temptation and withdrew his opposition. On August 18 Kearny, unresisted, entered Santa Fe at the head of his army. The conquest of New Mexico was over.

For some weeks the native population stood hopefully by, wondering what was in store for them. But their hope changed to

doubt, and doubt to mistrust when President Polk sent a message repudiating his general's promise to give New Mexicans the rights of American citizenship. Instead he ordered that the country be treated as conquered territory. The best the population could expect was an amelioration of the strict martial law which Kearny had proclaimed. Polk's message further directed Kearny to occupy all of New Mexico, including the land west of the Rio Grande. It is not surprising that overnight Archuleta's friendship turned into bitter hostility. A large part of the population, following his leadership, secretly banded together for the purpose of throwing off the foreign yoke at the first opportunity.

On September 25 Kearny departed for California, and soon after most of the Missouri volunteers marched off to Chihuahua to join General John E. Wool, who had been ordered to occupy that city. New Mexico was left in charge of Colonel Sterling Price, a Missourian of little or no military training. Discipline in the depleted army deteriorated rapidly. The soldiers became a mere mob. Drilling ceased almost completely; officers and privates alike indulged in the wildest dissipation. Within a short time one-fifth of Price's force died from overindulgences and sickness. Contempt for the invaders grew into hatred when the soldiers began treating the natives brutally, and insulted them on every possible occasion. Even without the impetus of Archuleta's plotters, a revolt would have been inevitable. As it was, the spirit of opposition grew speedily and a day was set for the uprising. It was to be Christmas Eve of 1846. That night the chief conspirators were to assemble in a church at the state capital and remain hidden until other revolutionaries could filter in from the neighboring districts. At midnight the sound of the church bell would be signal for the outbreak. The artillery on the plaza was to be seized first and so placed as to command the important parts of the town. Then the palace would be stormed and Price taken prisoner.

Unfortunately, wine and a woman upset this carefully laid plan. One of the conspirators had talked too freely to a prostitute, who reported the plot to one of the officials. Quick action followed and a dragnet was spread for the conspirators. Archuleta himself escaped but most of the other ringleaders were arrested and put on trial before a court-martial.

Among the patriots who had taken a leading part in the contemplated insurrection was a young Mexican named Manuel Antonio Chavez, whose family could trace its ancestry back to the twelfth century. The name Chavez was a prominent one in the history of the country and its honor had always been held high. Manuel was a native of Albuquerque, and had distinguished himself as a youth in fighting the Navajos, who never ceased harassing the Mexican settlers. He had been an officer in Armijo's army and foremost among those who had protested against the abandonment of Apache Canyon at Kearny's approach.

In due course of time the trial was held. Chavez was ably defended by a captain of the United States Army and to his bewilderment gained an acquittal. Like all other prisoners, he had considered the treason trial a mere mockery and a prelude to certain death.

No record exists of what transformation this unexpected verdict produced in the young Mexican; but the consequences it brought in its wake were destined to influence American history.

Fourteen years passed and civil war split the nation. New Mexico seemed far removed from the scene of the conflict, too far to be of concern to either of the two warring sections. The country was sparsely settled and possessed no known resources worth fighting for. The Mexicans were apathetic and more interested in parrying the perennial Indian thrusts than in the rights or wrongs of Secession.

Nevertheless, New Mexico was not to be spared the horrors of the fratricidal strife; for in its early days the state became the keystone of a grandiose strategy which, so its Southern sponsors hoped, would swing the fortunes of war to their side. What they envisioned was nothing less than the conquest of the entire Southwest for the Confederacy.

On the face of it, their plan looked promising. The southern half of California contained a strong Secessionist element and might be taken without bloodshed. Colorado could perhaps also be conquered from within. The Mormons of Utah were hostile to the Federal Government and would act as a buffer to a Union flank attack. Once in possession of Colorado and California, the Confederates would control the gold supply of the country; along the Pacific coast they could build enough merchant boats and war vessels to nullify the blockade. With ships protected by strong convoys to bring in arms, and gold to pay for them, the Confederacy, it was believed, could not be conquered. It was a dream worth dreaming.

The man selected to make the dream come true was H. H. Sibley, a former major in the United States Army, who had resigned his commission in the spring of 1861 and been appointed a Confederate general. Sibley was known in military circles as the inventor of an army tent named after him; to his subordinates he was better known for his love of liquor. It was said of him that he would rather ride in an ambulance than on horseback and that if an army surgeon wanted a sinecure, he need only prescribe a certain medicine of which the general was said to be inordinately fond.

Sibley opened headquarters at San Antonio, assembled thirty-five hundred Texans and, in January 1862, started out at their head to become conqueror of the territory from El Paso del Norte to the Pacific Ocean. At first he encountered little resistance. The country between him and Santa Fe was dotted with military posts,

but most of them had surrendered or had been evacuated by their garrisons. Only Fort Craig on the Rio Grande, one hundred and fifty miles north of the site of present-day El Paso, was a serious stumbling block in his path. It was held by about three thousand men under Colonel E. R. S. Canby, an experienced officer who knew his business. Sibley did not choose to invest Fort Craig, and when Canby left his fortifications to meet his opponent in open battle, he was brushed aside at the little village of Valverde. Sibley did not stop to celebrate his victory. Marching north, he occupied Albuquerque and Santa Fe in quick succession, but not quickly enough to capture the military supply depots stored there. While the bulk of his army enjoyed a badly needed rest at the state capital, detachments were sent as far west as Tucson and Yuma. The Confederate conquest of the Southwest was on its way.

At Santa Fe, Sibley faced a thorny problem. He could either strike out for the coast at once or else turn eastward first to guard his rear by incorporating Colorado into the Confederacy. That mountain state was protected by Fort Union, a depot well stocked but weakly defended. After weighing the pros and cons carefully, Sibley decided to march against Fort Union. The supplies there would refit his army and replenish the munitions which his troops had shot away prodigiously. He had no fear of Canby, who was still at Fort Craig and whom he expected to outdistance with ease.

If Sibley had counted on taking Fort Union in a walkaway, he was soon disillusioned. Colorado's energetic governor, William Gilpin, had reinforced the stronghold which guarded the gateway to his state. A large troop of hardy miners had enrolled as volunteers and reached the post by forced marches. There they were thoroughly equipped and without delay set out to beat Sibley at his own game by taking the offensive. Under the leadership of Major J. M. Chivington, a former Denver clergyman, they ascended Apache Canyon, in the hope of executing a surprise attack

on Santa Fe. But they were too late. Halfway through the pass they met a Confederate advance column bound for Fort Union. The fight which ensued was short and indecisive. In the evening both sides retired and waited for the main bodies of their respective armies before renewing the battle.

When the morning of March 28, 1862, dawned on the ragged mountains east of New Mexico's capital, both armies and their reinforcements were in position. The Colorado troops had been put under command of Colonel John P. Slough, a Denver lawyer, who later became military governor of Alexandria, Virginia, and in 1865, acted as a pallbearer at Lincoln's funeral. His force totaled thirteen hundred men. Opposed to him was an approximately equal number of Confederates under the nominal leadership of Sibley, but the general was reported under his doctor's care and was at no time nearer to the battleground than twenty miles. The actual command devolved on his next in rank, Colonel W. R. Scurry, a dependable officer, who had fought as major under General Zachary Taylor in 1846, and had distinguished himself in the Battle of Monterey.

Colonel Slough surveyed the situation with anxiety. His miners had fought like demons the day before, and he had since been strengthened by some well-disciplined regulars. On the other hand the Texans too had proved themselves daring fighters, and many of them were veterans of the Mexican War. Before deciding on the proper disposition of his force, he called a council of war.

Among those invited to attend was the erstwhile Mexican officer Manuel Chavez. After recovering his freedom fifteen years before, Chavez had enlisted as a private in the United States Army, had fought against his own insurgent countrymen and by 1855 had gained the confidence of his superiors to such a degree that he was allowed to lead an expedition against some hostile Indians. At the outbreak of the Civil War he was offered a commission in the Con-

federate Army, but refused, and was appointed colonel of the 2nd New Mexico Volunteers. In the battle of Valverde he had shown great valor, although he had been unable to stem the precipitate flight of his men who showed no stomach for the fight.

Chavez sat in silence while Slough and the other officers discussed the situation. No one asked his advice. But when the talk slowed down and no plan had been presented which offered encouraging possibilities, he rose from his seat. His words came slowly, for he had never acquired a perfect knowledge of English. But as he proceeded to outline his idea, all present listened with attention. The former Mexican officer proposed to send four hundred men into the rear of Sibley's army in order to destroy his supply train. This, he contended, would cripple the enemy even more effectively than a decisive victory in battle. Chavez knew a mountain path, dangerous to be sure, but passable under expert guidance, which would bring the detachment to the desired spot. Where that spot was he had ascertained from prisoners taken the day before.

When Chavez had finished, no one appeared willing to take the floor. At last Colonel Slough spoke. "Colonel Chavez," he said, "if we send four hundred men over the mountains, we'll have barely enough left to make a show of resistance, and we are bound to be beaten before the day is over."

"That is so, señor," Chavez replied respectfully. "You'll lose the battle. But what you will win is the campaign."

"How do you figure that out?" one of the officers asked, glancing at Chavez with open suspicion. He had just confided to the officer next to him that so far as he was concerned he wouldn't trust any Mexican farther than he could throw him.

"That's simple," Chavez declared, while a tinge of red diffused his dark cheeks. "If you knew this country the way I do you'd think so too. Sibley is hundreds of miles away from his base at San

Antonio, and the biggest part of his train is with Scurry. Every wagon he loses, every piece of equipment we take away from him, is gone for good. He cannot replace them. That's all." He shrugged his shoulders and sat down.

The discussion became animated. The officers of the regular army were unanimously against the plan. To split an army in the face of the enemy on the eve of battle was military suicide. The others were divided in their views. Chavez's strongest supporter was Major Chivington, who had led the previous day's combat and was in the best position to evaluate Chavez's arguments. Colonel Slough also seemed inclined toward the proposition. He asked several pertinent questions and in the end decided to accept the Mexican's counsel. Major Chivington was to be put in command of the expedition, with Colonel Chavez acting as guide. This arrangement, Colonel Slough thought, would mollify the officers who mistrusted Chavez's loyalty. Perhaps he himself was not without secret doubts. Chavez agreed without protest. He stepped over to Major Chivington, saluted and bowed himself out. Soon afterward the meeting broke up.

On the morning of March 28, Colonel Scurry left his camp at Johnson's ranch, at the western entrance of the pass, and marched into Apache Canyon. A mile from a row of buildings known as Pigeon Ranch, he came to a halt, for skirmishers had reported that its adobe houses were occupied by Federal troops. As the position was well adapted for both attack and defense, Scurry chose it as battleground. Circumstances of which he was unaware improved his chances for victory. Only a third of Slough's force had ever been under fire, while the few Confederates who were not veterans had gained both experience and confidence at the battle of Valverde. A goodly portion of the Colorado troops had marched thirty-five miles to reach the canyon and were exhausted. Moreover, Colonel Slough, a former antiwar Democrat, was ex-

ceedingly unpopular with his soldiers; his field officers mistrusted him, and some even suspected his loyalty.

About nine o'clock in the morning the battle opened with a sudden dash by dismounted Texas Rangers. Within a few minutes the fighting became general and furious. For the greater part it was and remained throughout the day, a head-on collision between two small armies, for the narrow defile hindered the development of flank attacks. As was to be expected in a clash between evenly matched men, the larger force eventually gained the upper hand. Slowly and stubbornly the Nationals, weakened by the absence of Chivington's contingent, gave ground.

Meanwhile the major's encircling column was proceeding toward its destination. They marched eight miles through a side canyon, then crept up a steep mountain, vainly trying to keep their alignment among dense thickets of cedar bushes and scrub pines. After covering a distance of eight more miles, they had lost all sense of direction in the labyrinth of rocks, through which they had to pick a tortuous path. Only Chavez' unerring guidance kept them from straying. Long before they reached the top, heavy cannonading in the valley below had announced the beginning of the battle. As the echoes of the firing gradually became fainter, Chivington expressed fear that the Confederates were gaining.

"Colonel," he said to Chavez, who was at his side, "I am afraid our men down there are being beaten."

For a moment dark suspicion arose in his mind. Could his judgment have been wrong after all? Was he being led into a trap? But Chavez apparently read his thoughts and smiled indulgently.

"Major," he said in his slow, deliberate manner of speech, "let me tell you something. When I was a boy, I once saw a big dog fight a wildcat. He had the cat down and was pinning her to the ground. It looked as if at any moment he was going to sink his

teeth into her throat; but the cat squirmed and twisted, and all the time she was clawing at him with her hind legs and tearing his belly open. Suddenly the dog gave a terrible yowl and fell dead. The cat got up, shook herself and walked away."

Chivington gave his guide a searching look. "And so?" he asked.

"Wait and see," Chavez replied.

After five hours of strenuous marching, the detachment reached the summit. A sentinel who had been stationed there was quickly subdued, and Chivington questioned him. The Confederate camp was right below them, the prisoner asserted, a few yards farther and they could see for themselves. He was telling the truth. One thousand feet down the steep mountainside the major espied Johnson's ranch and near it a row of tents and a wagon train.

Chivington ordered an hour's rest while he reconnoitered. He noted a mounted cannon which had been posted on top of a low knoll, but no gunners near it. Small groups of soldiers were moving leisurely about, unconscious of impending danger. It seemed too good to be true. The biggest part of the enemy's supplies were at the mercy of the Union force. If this camp could be captured, Sibley would be disemboweled. The outcome of the battle in the canyon had ceased to be important. Chivington now understood the meaning of Chavez' story. He walked over to his guide and wordlessly pressed his hand.

In silence the men started their hazardous descent. With the aid of ropes and straps they lowered themselves from ledge to ledge, and when they came to precipices which impeded their progress, they formed a human chain to help one another. Unfortunately loosened rocks began rolling down the slope and aroused the attention of the camp. The sentry gave the alarm. The officers ordered the men to fall in, the gunners jumped to their posts, trained the cannon on the approaching enemy and let go. Their

ammunition, however, was wasted. The worst of the Federals' trip lay behind them and, scattered as they were, they offered poor targets.

Whatever hope the Confederate officers still entertained of saving the camp was lost when terror-stricken teamsters seized the horses and rode toward safety. The panic spread and soon it was every man for himself. Two German companies, which had been detailed to guard the camp, had left in the forenoon to join in the battle, muttering that there was no glory to be gained in watching mules. Of the two hundred fifty men to whom Colonel Scurry had entrusted the protection of his train, only a hundred had remained. Further resistance was useless. Within a few minutes the ground was deserted. The only men to stand bravely by their posts were the gunners. They kept firing their lone cannon until they were felled with a single volley by a squad of sharpshooters who had crept up behind them.

Chivington's victory was complete and he exploited it thoroughly. The supply train consisted of some eighty wagons, all heavily loaded with ammunition, forage, baggage, medical stores and various implements of war. Under the watchful eyes of officers the wagons were overturned and set on fire. The smell of burning leather mingled with the aroma of sizzling bacon and the acrid smoke of charred clothing. Whenever the flames reached a powder barrel they would shoot two hundred feet into the air, carrying blazing debris with them. The horses and mules, of which there were nearly a thousand, presented a baffling problem. They were valuable property but, as they could not be taken along, they had to be bayoneted. Their blood "flowed like a river," as one of the soldiers remembered years later. When the holocaust was over nothing but the hoops of the wagon wheels was left. These writers were told that for a long time afterward neighboring ranchers helped themselves to these remains whenever the need

arose. Twenty-five years ago a small pile of rust was yet visible, where once the wagons had stood, and the bark of a tree near by still showed cuts of the rope by which the gun had been hoisted into position.

It was getting dark and Chivington judged it high time to join the main army. An urgent message from headquarters informed him that Slough had retreated a few miles toward Fort Union and was badly in want of reinforcements. Scurry's Texans stood between the two parts of the Union Army, blocking the most direct line of communication. Chivington was therefore compelled to make his return march over the mountains and executed it under the greatest difficulties. Nevertheless, by ten o'clock in the evening all Federal forces were reunited and ready for the next day's encounter.

But the battle of Apache Canyon was over. One of the officers at the Confederate camp had escaped on horseback, and the news of the calamity reached Colonel Scurry, just when he was congratulating himself on having won the day. Instead of renewing the fight, he asked for an armistice to attend the wounded. In his heart he knew that the destruction of his train made further campaigning impossible. Of ammunition the men had only what they carried on their persons, ten rounds for each small arm; none at all was available for the artillery. Provisions were so low that two days later Scurry, in his official report written at Santa Fe, made a pathetic confession. "I was compelled to come here for something to eat," he said. If Colonel Slough had attacked at once, he would have put his enemies to flight or captured them. Colonel Canby, however, who was his superior officer, had issued strict orders to "protect Fort Union at all hazards," which left Slough no choice. He took his army back to Colorado and resigned in disgust.

Colonel Scurry, fully realizing the extent of the disaster which had befallen him, ordered a hasty retreat. At Pigeon Ranch, two

hundred wounded were left behind, of whom a score died. A wrinkled old woman who had been pressed into service as nurse when she was a girl of fifteen told the writers that for years scum from the decomposing bodies would rise to the surface of the corral in hot weather. Thus was kept alive the memory of a battle fought on a principle which a few months later Lee and Jackson were to make famous at Chancellorsville.

The destruction of Scurry's camp marked the end of Sibley's ambitious project. The Confederate commander was stranded in a barren and hostile country, without subsistence and military supplies. His little army, harassed by Canby, who meanwhile had come up from Fort Craig, was not even allowed to surrender because the Union troops had scarcely enough food for themselves. Scurry's force staggered back to its starting point in disorganized groups, arriving sometimes two by two, often one by one.

Sibley escaped with his life but, having lost so many of his personal belongings that he had to borrow essential wearing apparel from friends, was not loath to leave New Mexico. When he composed the official report of his campaign, he cast one more glance backward.

"Except for its political geographical position," he declared half apologetically, "the territory of New Mexico is not worth a quarter of the blood expended in its conquest." Then he added a sentence which, in view of his experiences, is understandable: "I cannot speak encouragingly for the future, my troops having manifested a dogged, irreconcilable detestation of the country and the people."

Whether Sibley's plan could have succeeded if Manuel Chavez had not punctured it at Johnson's ranch is debatable. Fort Union had been mined and would have proved an empty prize. California troops had started out to meet his threatening invasion and dispersed the Confederate garrisons at Yuma and Tucson.

The natives of New Mexico hated the Texans even worse than they hated the Indians. At no time had the Confederates had a base of supplies near by, and with Fort Craig in enemy hands, they could not have established one. On the other hand, the Californians on their way east were no better off, and the hostility of the populace would be no menace once Sibley had left the territory. Canby had ordered Slough's regiments withdrawn and thereby removed Sibley's chief obstacle. Additional provisions could perhaps have been secured on the way. War being a game of chance, Sibley might yet have realized his dream if he had won the battle of Apache Canyon and held onto his supply train; he then might have marched into California ahead of Canby and taken possession of the Pacific Coast for the Confederacy. Fortune might have favored him throughout, and all this might conceivably have come to pass—if a Mexican patriot named Manuel Antonio Chavez, accused of high treason fifteen years before, had been sentenced to death instead of gaining an honorable acquittal. *Quién sabe?*

1861-1865

In which it appears that the law of self-preservation is the strongest law of all

IF A HIGH British official had not violated a law of his country, the United States would probably have gone to war with England in the summer of 1863.

The captain of the mail steamer *Bienville*, James Dunwoody Bulloch, sat on a swivel chair in his cabin, lost in thought. His ship was lying at anchor in the harbor of New Orleans, a city which on this April morning of 1861 was in an uproar. Fort Sumter had been fired on a few days before, and the youth of Louisiana fairly besieged the hastily opened recruiting stations, afraid they might miss the war. Bulloch himself, although skipper of a Yankee-owned boat, was a Georgian by birth, and on the day of the first shot had sent a telegram to Judah Benjamin, the Confederate Attorney General, offering his services to the Confederate Navy. He was worried because he had received no reply. Perhaps he, too, should join the crowd and enlist as a private. . . .

At this moment a steward entered and announced two gentlemen. One was the local agent of the New York steamship line in whose service Bulloch was engaged, and the other produced credentials proving him to be an emissary of the Confederate government at Montgomery. Bulloch asked his visitors to be seated and waited for them to open the conversation.

"Mr. Bulloch," the emissary began, "I know you as a Southern patriot and am hardly violating a confidence by telling you that the

Confederacy is badly in need of ships. I shall state the reason for my call without further preliminaries; here is a letter empowering me to buy the *Bienville* at a fair price. Our government has no intention of taking private property without compensation."

Bulloch shook his head emphatically. The *Bienville*, he said, was not his personal property; he was her captain, and the steamship company had put him into a position of trust. A Bulloch's word had always been good, ever since pre-Revolutionary days.

"Captain," the agent remarked, "the owners of your company have become our enemies. I do not think your point is well taken."

"There is no use prolonging this argument," Bulloch declared, rising from his chair. "Gentlemen, I shall fight on our side as soon as my services are accepted. But if you wish to take my ship, you will have to use force. And now I wish you a good day."

A few days later Bulloch sailed the *Bienville* back to New York, delivered her to her owners and promptly resigned.

Bulloch's honorable conduct was in line with the tradition his family had built up for many years. His ancestry was second to none. His great-grandfather had held high office in colonial days; his father had been a prominent businessman; his mother was the daughter of a United States senator. Bulloch himself was a former officer of the United States Navy and, although he had discharged his duties well, had been given little opportunity to achieve distinction. He had served on the frigate *United States*; later he was sent to Brazilian and Mediterranean stations. Eventually he had resigned and entered the business of private mail service, thereby acquiring a consummate knowledge of maritime and international law.

Bulloch knew as well as anyone that the need of the Confederacy for ships was pressing. Merchant ships were needed to bring products of all kinds through the blockade which Lincoln had proclaimed, or the war could not be carried on; battleships were

needed to destroy Northern commerce and lure the blockading vessels from their posts outside Southern ports. To build these ships in home waters was difficult, due to lack of shipyards, materials and skilled workers. The only hope lay in buying them abroad, and England was the best country to supply them in quantity.

But England's position, ever since the beginning of the war, had been uncertain. Queen Victoria's Cabinet had accorded the Confederacy the rights of a belligerent and several times almost gave it official recognition, but each time the crucial period passed, leaving matters in a state of suspense.

Both the North and the South fully appreciated the importance of England's attitude, and tried to find the best talents to represent their respective interests in London. Lincoln's choice fell on Charles Francis Adams, descendant of an old and illustrious Boston family. Jefferson Davis countered with Ambrose Dudley Mann, a Virginian who had represented the United States in various European countries since 1842, and William Lowndes Yancey, who had been a persistent and radical advocate of Secessionist principles. The great diplomatic battle was on. It was to be of long duration, with the issue constantly in doubt.

Upon Bulloch's arrival in New York he found a letter waiting for him. It was signed by Attorney General Judah Benjamin and contained only these cryptic words: "The Secretary of the Navy desires you to come to Montgomery without delay."

The call had come. Bulloch hoped that he would be assigned to a warship and see action. A few days afterward he was ushered into the presence of Confederate Secretary of the Navy Stephen R. Mallory.

The two men looked each other over sharply. Mallory, shrewd and worldly-wise, had been United States senator from Florida and a member of the Committee on Naval Affairs. As such he

had gained a wide knowledge of the organization and equipment of the United States Navy. Now, burdened with the responsibility of conducting the maritime affairs of a newly formed government, he knew that his task was a formidable one. What he intended to do was to break the forthcoming blockade before it had been fairly put into operation. He was one of the few Southerners who did not take the threat of naval encirclement lightly. True, the North had only a few old-fashioned vessels, and for a while Lincoln's proclamation would be little more than a scrap of paper; but Mallory knew what Yankee ingenuity and perseverance could do. The South had few natural resources and fewer industries. Within the foreseeable future the blockade would strangle it. It was Mallory's duty to prepare effective countermeasures and he proposed to do so with all the energy for which he was noted.

As he looked at Bulloch he saw before him a man slightly less than forty years old, whom the sun and the winds had made look considerably older. His high forehead was marked by receding hair. His frank wide-open eyes inspired confidence. In particular Mallory liked Bulloch's chin, because beneath heavy sideburns and bristling mutton-chop whiskers he discerned a firmness which impressed him favorably. Firmness and integrity were wanted for the job the secretary had in mind. Bulloch's integrity had already been demonstrated by his conduct in the *Bienville* affair.

Time was precious and Mallory dispensed with formalities. "I am glad to see you," he said. "I want you to go to Europe. When can you sail?"

If Bulloch was startled, he did not show it.

"As soon as you have explained what I am to do" was his laconic reply.

The interview, thus unceremoniously begun, lasted for many hours. When it ended, Mr. Mallory was satisfied that in Bulloch he had found the right man. He summarized the purpose of the

meeting in a curt statement. The former United States officer was to go abroad and there either buy a Confederate navy or have one built. Mallory could not tell him how to go about this; all he could do was to give him general instructions and caution him to destroy all memoranda before starting on the trip.

A few days later Bulloch was on his way. He had been ordered to take no chances of being captured on a Confederate steamer; therefore, he traveled by way of Canada. When the S.S. *North American*, on which he had taken passage, arrived in Liverpool on June 4, he had formulated his plans.

In London he called first on the Southern commissioners who acted as unrecognized Confederate ministers to England. They quickly acquainted Bulloch with the diplomatic situation. Lord John Palmerston, the British Prime Minister, was reputed to be sympathetic toward the South; Lord John Russell, his Minister of Foreign Affairs, was a riddle; but sentiment in England inclined toward the Confederacy, and Adams had no friends to speak of. Altogether conditions were propitious; therefore, Bulloch went to work at once. Although he was as yet without funds he was allowed the credit of a friendly banking house, and one month after his arrival the keel of the first boat was being laid; she was under full construction before money from America arrived. William C. Miller & Sons of Liverpool, the builders, had in their files the drawing of the latest British gunboats, and the *Oreto*, as the ship had been temporarily named, was modeled after them.

Bulloch's next visit was made to the prominent shipbuilding firm of Messrs. Laird at Birkenhead, near Liverpool, and a contract for another boat was speedily closed. To make sure that the business under discussion was perfectly legal, Bulloch consulted a local solicitor of high standing, and was assured that the mere building of a ship was not in violation of the English laws, no matter what the intent of the contracting parties might be. No

vessel could be designated as a warship unless it was armed and ready for combat.

The *Oreto* was finished in April of 1862, was rechristened the *Florida* and broke into the news right from the start. After many delays and still unarmed, she steamed into Mobile Bay in broad daylight, flying the English flag, under the very guns of the Federal blockading vessels. Luck was with her and boldness did the rest. One of the Union warships had absented herself in order to procure fresh meat; the remaining ones were hesitant about stopping what they took for the cruiser of a neutral power, and did not fire until too late. The North was furious, and the commanding naval officer was dismissed, but the exploit was greeted with undisguised delight by the South and its sympathizers.

Soon after the *Oreto* had left her berth, the boat which the Lairds had built and which still bore only the shop number 290 was completed, but this time Bulloch encountered obstacles in having the vessel released. Adams protested vehemently in the name of his government that it was to be used as a raider and submitted strong supporting evidence. Bulloch received confidential information that the government contemplated its seizure and acted with characteristic promptness. He ordered *Number 290* out on a trial trip, for which no papers were needed, and invited numerous guests to accompany him. The *Enrica*, as the boat had now been tentatively named, reportedly after a pretty office girl, slipped out of the Mersey River, but once out on the open sea the guests were disembarked. A tender supplied the required armament, the ship was commissioned as the Confederate cruiser *Alabama* and in command of the famous Admiral Raphael Semmes started on a long and valorous career. But this was history which still had to be written.

By the fall of 1861 Bulloch had accomplished all he could at the moment. For the immediate future his presence was not re-

quired, as the construction of the two vessels was in responsible hands, and he felt the need of going home to report personally to his government. This time he provided his own transportation. He outfitted the ship *Fingal* as a blockade runner and loaded her with munitions and arms on no small scale. The trim little boat carried fifteen thousand rifles, one million cartridges, two million percussion caps, four hundred thousand pounds of powder and a number of rifled Blakely guns, also plenty of clothes and military equipment. Thus stocked with an invaluable cargo she sailed on her way to Savannah.

An untoward incident interrupted the early part of her voyage. On October 19, during a heavy gale, it was discovered that through negligence on the part of her captain, the ship was running out of drinking water. Bulloch ordered her taken to the Bay of Praya on the island of Terceira, one of the Azores, where the water supply could be replenished. This lonely spot on the Atlantic proved a welcome find, as there the armament could be taken on board without fear of interruption. In the end the mishap proved a blessing in disguise, for during the following months the Bay of Praya became a favorite place of refuge for Confederate raiders. In due time the *Fingal* landed safely at Savannah and Bullock went to Richmond. Soon afterward he was closeted with Mallory behind shut doors, discussing various plans and possibilities.

Naval construction was undergoing a dramatic change. The British had built ironclads for several years, and the *Merrimac*, similarly armored, was being outfitted as a ram at Norfolk. The potentialities of this new style of war vessel could no longer be ignored. Let the old sea dogs say what they wanted to, it was clear that ironclads with superior guns were required to break the blockade. Unfortunately, there were no dry docks in the Confederacy where such ships could be built; moreover, there were no

steel mills to roll plates, no shops to construct engines. Materials and mechanics, all too few in number, had been requisitioned by the army. The conclusion was inevitable—the new ships would have to be built in England or France. No other country had equal facilities. It was further decided that the ships most earnestly desired should be fast, armored steel sloops of moderate size, about two thousand tons, should carry eight or ten heavy guns and be equipped with iron rams below the water line. Speed in having them built was of paramount importance. With these instructions the visiting emissary returned to Liverpool in the spring of 1862.

Bulloch was not a trained diplomat, but when he found himself in a whirlpool of political intrigue, he realized that victory would go to the one who played his cards to the best advantage. Adams, the United States minister to England, was no mean adversary. His father and grandfather had been Presidents of the United States, which gave him an impressive family background. In 1848 he had been in the public eye by running unsuccessfully for Vice-President on the ticket of an independent group known as the Conscience-Whigs. His practical political experience consisted of one term in the Massachusetts state legislature and one in the House of Representatives. By nature he was quiet and studious, and his dignified appearance was enhanced by his prematurely white hair. Behind Adams' unsmiling and complacent features coursed thoughts which few in the diplomatic corps could read correctly. Bulloch also had to admit that his opponent had overcome the chilliness with which he had first been received and now moved in a circle of influential friends.

Bulloch had been advised that the Confederacy's main hope for foreign recognition and possible intervention lay with the aristocrats and industrial leaders. The Lords of England never had resigned themselves to the republican form of government in America

and would have liked nothing better than to see it shatter itself against the first serious obstacle it had encountered since the days of Washington. The leaders of British industry, Bulloch thought, also could be counted on his side, for without cotton England was faced with a financial debacle. This had been the universal opinion in the Confederate States; but now that he was on the ground he discovered that the situation did not quite fit into these two formulas. The aristocrats were cold, calculating, and would take their own time in arriving at a decision. The industrialists, on the other hand, did not seem nearly so much worried about cotton as he had been led to believe. Being well supplied, they looked askance at further imports. Apparently they were not at all adverse to a temporary shortage, with an attending rise in price.

Bulloch's sober thought was that, all in all, Adams held the better hand. His appeal was to the masses, and their political power was not inconsiderable. Among the English laboring classes slavery had always been unpopular, and American abolitionist speakers were skillfully playing on their sympathy. But in the end, he concluded, it was the attitude of the government itself which would swing the balance to one side or the other, and there his opponent had a decided advantage. He had consular services at his command, something denied to the Confederacy, and he had unlimited monetary resources. Bulloch was compelled to strain his credit time and again, before remittances arrived to improve his bank balances.

Lord Palmerston, head of the British government, and a powerful figure in British politics since 1806, was getting old, and a great deal would depend on Lord John Russell, Palmerston's Minister of Foreign Affairs, a politician of unusual adroitness. His expressionless blue eyes had looked on many events in a long and successful career, which included a Prime Ministership under Queen Victoria, and his catlike oral thrusts were feared by all who had con-

tended against him in parliamentary debates. The Russell family had come to England with William the Conqueror and had played an honorable part in shaping her history.

This, then, was the arena into which Bulloch had been catapulted. Perhaps the best thing for him to do was to go straight ahead with his mission and meet any situation that might arise with the means at hand. He made the rounds of the shipbuilders, the steel-mill operators, the designers, and numerous other businessmen whose work would be needed in building his vessels. As the magnitude of his task was brought home to him, he became slightly discouraged. It would take at least a year to complete an order for one of these men-of-war, and the British government might step in at any time and undo his work. He therefore suggested to Mallory that it would be better, after all, to construct wooden ships in whatever yards were available in the South, and subsequently convert them into ironclads. He could procure the necessary steel plates, bolts, rivets, guns and turrets, and even the engines, and send them through the blockade.

The answer of the Confederate government was uncompromising. He was instructed to go ahead and carry out his original instructions.

Bulloch obeyed his instructions. He drew up specifications calling for powerful craft to carry stores for fifteen months, and sufficiently speedy to outrace most ships of their day. In armament they would have to combine the strongest features of the *Monitor* with those of the *Merrimac*. They were to be equipped with a revolving turret to give the guns a full sweep of the horizon, and also with a heavy iron ram. Rams were considered extremely efficacious weapons, especially against wooden vessels such as constituted the bulk of the blockading fleet. Bulloch had already established friendly relations with the shipbuilding firm of Laird Brothers, whose senior partner, John Laird, recently retired, had been elected

to Parliament where he wielded a strong influence in the interests of his industry. The Lairds had demonstrated their sympathies for the South by building the raider *Alabama*, but whatever their leanings, on the surface they were, like their government, strictly neutral.

The Lairds readily agreed to build two rams in accordance with Bulloch's specifications, but due precautions had to be taken to veil the real purpose of the transaction. Bulloch acted as a private individual, and the contract was designated as a purely commercial deal. He even obtained expert opinions as to whether iron plating of steamers was forbidden under the Foreign Enlistment Act, and was happy when he was informed by one of Liverpool's leading lawyers that the plating itself did not constitute a violation of the law.

By the middle of July 1862 the construction of the two ships was well under way. They were simply known as *Number 294* and *Number 295*. What their names would be after they had started on their adventurous careers, no one was presumptuous enough to ask, nor would he have been given a satisfying answer. Bulloch kept his home government fully informed on the progress, but he did not fail to point out what obstacles lay ahead before he could say that his work was finished. In August 1862, when the South was at the zenith of its military successes, he hoped that the two vessels would play an essential, perhaps a decisive role in the war, "provided [it] lasted that long." Nevertheless, he added, "the difficulty of getting the ships to sea will be very great"; in fact, he did not see by what means it could be overcome.

Bulloch's predictions of trouble around the corner were well founded. In November he had to report that bad weather was interfering with the work. In December the weather cleared, and the progress was more satisfactory; but at the beginning of 1863 his hopes again sunk low. A very embarrassing political question

had arisen. The British Ministry, to whom Adams was giving no peace and very little rest, as Bulloch sadly remarked, ordered the collectors of customs to report on all vessels built in English ship-yards. Perhaps this unwelcome development could be, at least in part, laid at the doorsteps of the Southern newspapers. They had openly bragged that Confederate armored ships were being constructed abroad and that the Northern blockaders had better prepare for an unpleasant surprise. London papers had reprinted the injudicious disclosure, and Adams made the most of it. The pretense that the Lairds were building the ships for a private entrepreneur could no longer be kept up. Somehow delays became more and more frequent. Nevertheless the work went on.

Then Bulloch conceived a shrewd move to forestall possible governmental interference. He would sell the vessels to a French firm. France was at peace and, even if the British authorities suspected the truth, they would think twice before offending the irascible French Emperor. Bulloch acted promptly. He found a buyer in Messrs. Bravay and Company of Paris, who paid a nominal sum and took over Laird's contract with the understanding that the ownership would revert to Bulloch as soon as the ships were finished and had been taken beyond British jurisdiction. The deal was consummated in June 1863. At the same time a rumor was set afloat that the men-of-war were really destined for the Pasha of Egypt, for whom the Parisian firm had previously acted as confidential agents.

Harassed between Bulloch's clever manipulation and Adam's constant prodding, the British government devised a plan to remove the cause of all this irritation. It would simply buy up the two ironclads for its own use. A navy officer was sent to Paris to negotiate the purchase of the vessels for the British admiralty; but Bravay declined all offers. The English Ministry, now strengthened in its belief that the ships were intended for the Confederacy,

began to give ear to the United States consul at Liverpool, who swamped the foreign office with affidavits supporting his contention. A bit of carelessness on the part of the Confederate authorities served to help their opponents. Six weeks previously the *Florida* had sent most of her crew to Liverpool, and simultaneously a large number of Confederate naval officers had arrived in England. The United States consul, of course, was not slow in emphasizing this suspicious circumstance, and Bulloch saw that he would have to meet the issue. He therefore wrote to Commissioner John Slidell, who represented the Confederate interests in France, suggesting that Napoleon III defend the rights of a French citizen, whose property rights were being endangered. Napoleon had repeatedly asserted his friendliness to the Confederate cause, but few ever took his words at par value. Those who did usually found cause to regret it. As early as 1862 Slidell had been informed that Confederate ships of war could be built in France, and in July of that year Bulloch had contracted for two vessels with a firm in Bordeaux. The only conditions the Emperor had imposed were that no French subjects should be enlisted and that the raider should not begin its depredations too soon after leaving French jurisdiction. Confirming the Emperor's directions, the French Minister of Marine had given his official permission in June 1863. The ironclads, he decided, not only could be built, but could also be armed prior to their departure. It looked like an open bid for business in behalf of the French shipbuilders.

Both Bulloch and Slidell were convinced that Napoleon, slippery as he was, this time would not go back on his word. His imperialistic designs on Mexico were opposed by the United States, thus tying him closely to the Confederacy. Moreover, his national pride, it was hoped, would impel him to protect French interests against the overbearing British, whom he despised and mistrusted.

Bulloch's spirits soared again. Assured that his subterfuge

would baffle Adams and his British friends, he now submitted a daring plan to his superiors. The cruisers, when ready for the sea, were to sail with skeleton crews to Wilmington, North Carolina, where they would be fully manned. After that, they would sweep the blockaders off the ocean "from the Capes of Virginia to Sabine Pass," and re-establish Southern trade with Europe. Then they could either capture New Orleans or sail up the Mississippi and lift the siege of Vicksburg. Nor was that all. Bulloch envisioned his ships ascending the Potomac and laying the Northern capital under tribute. Philadelphia and New York could be threatened, too. There was absolutely no limit to the range of his hopeful predictions.

The plans thus laid out may have appeared fanciful, but Lincoln's government undeniably did face a frightening prospect. The Union had no vessels to match these new terrors of the sea. The United States minister in London was considerably worried. So far his adversary had trumped all his cards. Something had to be done, and at once. But what? He had lost out on the *Florida* and the *Alabama*, and the prospect for keeping the new rams from doing serious mischief looked dismal. But Adams never gave up the fight, and at last his opportunity came to even up the score. A small wooden-screw steamer, the *Alexandria*, named after the Princess of Wales, was being fitted out as a commerce raider in a British yard, and in April 1863 Russell, plagued incessantly by the watchful American minister, ordered her to be seized. Furthermore, he issued orders, whenever satisfactory evidence could be procured, to stop any vessels intended for Confederate service. It was a sop thrown to the irate North, where feeling against Great Britain was beginning to run dangerously high.

Adams' triumph was short-lived. Bulloch fought the seizure in court, and in June 1863 the trial was held. The judge made it plain that in his opinion the government had no case. As a result,

the jury decided that the *Alexandria* had been seized illegally and should be released.

Counsel for the Crown at once appealed to the Exchequer Chamber, but this court concurred with the verdict of the jury. The act of the government was again condemned. Lord Russell, so the court declared, had exceeded the authority vested in him by the Foreign Enlistment Act.

The American minister refused to accept defeat. He had active friends in Parliament, and they introduced an amendment to the act, designed to broaden the powers of the government, so as to enable it to halt construction of ships considered under suspicion. Bulloch met this move by mobilizing his own partisans, and the amendment failed to pass.

Much as Adams fretted over this new setback, everything was not yet lost. Lord Palmerston was induced to appeal the decision of the court to the House of Lords. No matter what the outcome, the delay would keep the *Alexandria* tied up in dock for a long time.

The great question now was how the latest interpretation of the English law would affect the two unfinished Laird rams. Their delivery evidently could not be stopped, unless clear evidence was found that they were intended to become Confederate war instruments. To do this was extremely difficult, if not outright impossible. The contract with the firm of Bravay and Company had been drawn up carefully and offered no loophole. To all outward purposes the Lairds were building two ships for a neutral power. Adams was disconsolate. He could think of no more ways to stay the calamity. To make matters worse, Lord Palmerston stated before Parliament in July 1863 that he, like the judge in the preceding trial, could see no difference in principle between muskets, cannon and ships. "These are all things by which war is carried on," he averred, and no one had as yet objected to the sale of arms

and ammunition. Precedent and international law had repeatedly confirmed this practice.

Washington was astir about the approaching menace. Gideon Welles, Lincoln's Secretary of the Navy, had received word from the United States consul at Liverpool that England would probably allow the much-discussed ships to leave. He hurried over to the State Department, but Secretary Seward smilingly advised him not to lose any sleep. The situation was well in hand. The ships would not leave.

Secretary of the Treasury Chase urged Welles to dispatch a fleet of war vessels to sink or capture the Confederate cruisers as soon as they came out. Seward, he said, was always too optimistic, too secretive. What Chase really meant was that one could not depend on Lincoln's erratic secretary of foreign affairs. At any rate, too much was at stake to leave things to the judgment of one man.

In the meantime, Adams was making Herculean efforts to bring Russell around to his point of view. He flooded the British Minister of Foreign Affairs with requests to seek proof that the ships were Confederate property, and furnished testimony of his own by the reams; it would take Russell weeks to digest it. The help of every friend Adams had was enlisted in this struggle, for the rams were ready to be launched.

Bulloch, of course, was not an idle onlooker to these moves, and his friends exerted all the counterpressure they could, admonishing Russell to obey the law. Badgered from both sides beyond the limits of endurance, the minister fled to his home in Scotland. This was not an unusual occurrence. Throughout his life, Britain's Foreign Minister was afflicted with a weak stomach and had to be as careful in selecting his food as he was in selecting his words. At this juncture Scotland and the rest it provided held for him an especially inviting allurements. Perhaps time would bring with it

some lucky turn which would save him from having to make a decision.

Unexpectedly a new and powerful factor entered the situation. Vicksburg had fallen on July 4, 1863, and Lee had retreated from Gettysburg. These twin Northern victories undermined Bulloch's position and changed the entire situation almost over night. On July 18 Adams noted in his diary that at a reception given by Lady Palmerston, the Prime Minister was more civil to him than at any time before. The law offices of the Crown were ordered to bestir themselves and sift anew the depositions submitted by Adams. But no immediate results followed. Her Majesty's legal advisers could not be shaken, and in two separate opinions affirmed that the government had no right to detain the vessels. The claim of French ownership could not legally be questioned.

Seward became incensed at this unexpected reverse. Always combative, and more so when the fortunes of war favored him, he wrote to Adams that if the laws of Great Britain were insufficient to stop the delivery of the cruisers, the United States would pursue them into British ports and chance the consequences.

Seward's threat, bold as it seemed, had considerable weight behind it. By this time most of the American commerce was moving in English boats, as a protection from Confederate raiders, and greatly to the profit of British businessmen. The Federal Navy also was growing rapidly, and some of its new ships were of a type well adapted, both in speed and armament, to duplicate on a large scale the exploits of the Confederate cruisers, but with British ships as their victims.

Urged into renewed action, Adams made fresh representations to Russell who, although removed from the tumult of London in his Northern retreat, finally was forced to reply. The law, he wrote to the American minister on September 1, 1863, gave him no authority

to interfere with the ships' departure. The courts had so ruled; nevertheless, he would see to it that a careful watch was being kept and that the government would step in, if evidence was found to justify interference. Inasmuch as the seizure of the *Alexandria* had been declared illegal, that was all he could do.

This letter did not reach London until September 4, and Adams, still ignorant of its contents, loosed a barrage of new arguments in an attempt to prevent the boats' departure, which now was imminent. He almost buried Russell under new depositions and entered a "last solemn protest against the commission of such an act of hostility."

Hardly had he dispatched this note when he received Russell's letter of September 1, which awarded to Bulloch the final decision in the long-drawn-out battle of wits.

Adams was at bay. On the morning of September 5 he determined to play his last card. He wrote a letter to Russell which cut through all legal technicalities. The time had come to be blunt.

"I am honored by yours of the 1st instant," he began courteously enough. "I trust I need not express how profound is my regret at the conclusion at which Her Majesty's Government has arrived." Then he gradually pulled out the stops. He pointed out that the "insurgents" would presently be free to attack New York, Boston and Portland, and to break the blockade. The United States, he plainly intimated, was fighting for its very existence, and henceforth would be governed by the law of self-preservation. Then, having worked himself up to a high point of exasperation, he came to a momentous climax. "It would be superfluous in me," he declared, "to point out to your Lordship that this is war."

The gauntlet had been flung down. The language was clear. Unless England backed down, the United States, brushing aside all diplomatic cobwebs, was ready to fight.

Adams would hardly have delivered this ultimatum had he

known that on September 3, Russell had sent a letter to Lord Palmerston completely reversing himself. "The conduct of the gentlemen who have contracted for the ironclads at Birkenhead," he wrote, "is so very suspicious that I have thought it necessary to direct that they should be detained." The next sentence, striking in its import, obviously came hard. "The attorney-general has been consulted and concurs with the measure as one of policy, though not of strict law."

The British government, yielding to prudence, had decided to defy its own statutes. A slightly veiled confession of guilt followed. "We shall thus test the law, and if we have to pay damages, we have satisfied the opinion which prevails here, as well as in America, that this kind of neutral hostility should not be allowed to go on without some attempt to stop it." The law-breaker, putting national interest above legal principles, was determined to commit an offense, but declared himself willing to pay the penalty.

The crisis was over. Lord Russell had saved his nation from war with America. Seward's mysterious smile was vindicated. Once more his boldness had achieved a diplomatic victory. He had recognized in Russell a shrewd politician, and he knew that shrewd politicians rarely line up with the losing side.

Bulloch stood helplessly by while his dream castle dissolved in thin air. On September 8 the London papers announced the seizure of his vessels by the Queen's marines. To make doubly sure, five British men-of-war were ordered to the Mersey River to prevent the rams from leaving their berths.

The only remaining hope for Bulloch now lay in the unfinished warships at the docks of Bordeaux. This hope also was soon dissipated. The French Emperor, too, had been reading the news from America and was quick to readjust his policies to the changing current. In November 1863, the builders at Bordeaux were

formally notified by both the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Marine that the vessels could not be delivered to any Confederate agent, but must be sold, unarmed, to some neutral merchant. Bulloch at once attempted to arrange a fictitious sale but, under pressure from the French government, the vessels were disposed of without his consent, even without his knowledge. As if to thumb his nose at the losing side, Napoleon had one ironclad sold to Denmark, although that kingdom was then at war with Prussia and, as a crowning insult, sent her to Copenhagen under the French flag, under a French commander and with a French crew. Then, as if to rub salt into bleeding wounds, he sold the second ironclad to Prussia, the aggressor nation in the Danish conflict.

Bulloch was beaten and knew it. Any further effort to build or buy a Confederate fleet in Europe would have been foolhardy. He retired from the field, and watched the end of the struggle in the role of a mere bystander. When the war was over, he remained in England, for he feared imprisonment if he returned to America. After he had paid all obligations incurred by him, he still found himself in possession of undistributed funds; but by that time there was no one to whom they could be returned. Honest as he was, he paid out his remaining deposits to stranded ex-Confederates and started a new career as a poor man. Eventually he entered the cotton business in Liverpool, the city of his sharpest battles and his keenest disappointments. He died there in the year 1901.

The rams, which had brought the two big English-speaking nations to the brink of war, were eventually purchased by England and sailed the seas under the British flag. If they did anything outstandingly valorous, there is no record of it. What they would have done under the Stars and Bars cannot, of course, be stated with certainty. Few, however, who have followed the dar-

ing deeds of the *Alabama* and other Confederate cruisers will doubt that, given the opportunity, they would have greatly helped their cause; and *if* their release would have brought England into the war on the side of the South, who could say what the final outcome would have been?

1862-1863

In which a dread shadow of things to come is cast ahead

IF EDWIN M. STANTON, Lincoln's Secretary of War, had not pigeon-holed a letter sent to him in April, 1862, but had brought it to the attention of the Cabinet, it might have resulted in sweeping consequences, such as these. . . .

The special Cabinet meeting which Lincoln had called that hot July afternoon in 1862 was fully attended. Besides the Cabinet members, the military was represented by General in Chief Henry W. Halleck and George B. McClellan, head of the Army of the Potomac. An air of anxious expectancy hung over the room. Only Lincoln, Stanton and the two officers seemed aware of why the meeting had been called, but their faces gave no inkling of what they knew. Stanton kept stroking his long brown beard, looking more important than ever. Halleck seemed uncomfortable and scratched his elbow now and then, a habit he had which annoyed all those who had business with him. McClellan sat erect, glancing neither to the left nor the right of him. He seemed immersed in deep and unpleasant meditation.

Lincoln was in an unusually solemn mood. For a long time he reclined in his chair at the head of the conference table gazing into space, apparently undecided what to do. At one time he took a few steps toward the window, then resumed his seat. Stanton fidgeted uneasily; the other men preserved their self-control with difficulty. At last the President spoke.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I have called you together today to read you one of the strangest communications which has ever come to my notice. I must impose strictest secrecy on you all. Our city is honeycombed with Confederate spies, and if the contents of this letter were to become known to them the results would be ruinous. Have I your sacred promise?"

Those present, visibly excited and casting curious looks at one another, lifted their hands as if taking an oath. Lincoln laboriously adjusted his eyeglasses, pulled a letter from his pocket and started to read it to the Cabinet. Those sitting close by saw that it was legibly written and had some drawings at its head.

Hon. Edwin M. Stanton,
Sec. of War.
Sir:

The above is a representation of a projectile which I have devised to be used as a means for routing an *entrenched* enemy. Believing it to be new and valuable, I send the War Department a brief description: Chlorine is a gas so irritating in its effects upon the respiratory organs, that a small quantity diffused in the atmosphere, produces incessant & uncontrollably violent coughing. It is $2\frac{1}{2}$ times heavier than the atmosphere, and when subjected to a pressure of 60 pounds to the inch, it is condensed into a liquid, its volume being reduced many hundred times. A shell holding two or three quarts, would therefore contain many cubic feet of the gas.

If the shell should explode over the heads of the enemy, the gas would, by its great specific gravity, rapidly fall to the ground: the men could not dodge it, and their first intimation of its presence would be by its inhalation, which would most effectually disqualify every man for service that was within the circle of its influence; rendering the disarming and capturing of them as certain as though both their legs were broken.

To silence an enemy's guns or drive him from his entrenchments, it would be only necessary to explode the shells over his

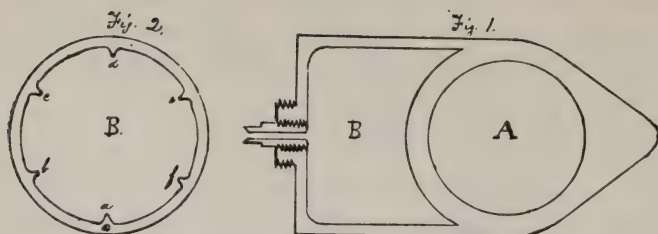


Fig. 1. Longitudinal section. Fig. 2. Transverse section of Chlorine chamber—
The flanges a, b, c, d, e, f. are to strengthen the chamber, without much
diminishing its capacity. A, Chamber of a common shell—
B, Chlorine Chamber.— There is no communication between the two chambers;
they are both in the same casting—

Hon. Edwin M. Stanton Sec. of War
Sir

The above is a representation of a projectile which I have devised to be used as a means for routing an entrenched enemy. Believing it to be new and valuable, I send the War Department a brief description: Chlorine is a gas so irritating in its effects upon the respiratory organs, that a small quantity diffused in the atmosphere, produces incessant & uncontrollably violent coughing. — It is 2½ times heavier than the atmosphere, and when subjected to a pressure of 60 pounds to the inch, it is condensed into a liquid, its volume being reduced many hundred times. A shell holding two or three quarts, would therefore contain many cubic feet of the gas—

If the shell should explode over the heads of the enemy, the gas would, by its great specific gravity, rapidly fall to the ground. The men could not dodge it, and their first intimation of its presence would be by its inhalation, which would most effectually

BEGINNING AND ENDING OF JOHN W. DOUGHTY'S
LETTER TO STANTON

works of an ordinary shell, it also carries with it a force against whose effect the most skillful military engineering can not possibly make any adequate provision—

As to the moral question involved in its introduction, I have, after watching the progress of events during the last eight months with reference to it, arrived at the somewhat paradoxical conclusion, that its introduction would very much lessen the sanguinary character of the battle field, and at the same time render conflicts more decisive in their results—

If I have erred, I have, at least meant well—

Wm. Edwin M. Stanton
Sec. War. U. S. A.

Yours
Respectfully,

John W. Doughty

April 5th/62. 419 Eighth Avenue

New York



THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES
Washington, D. C.

RECORDS OF THE WAR DEPARTMENT, Office of The Adjutant
General. Special File, Item 26.

Three Centimeters

head or on his windward side. If exploded in rapid succession over, or within a fort, evacuation or surrender could not be delayed beyond fifteen minutes. Case-mates & bomb-proofs would not protect the men.

This kind of shell would, I think, in the present advanced state of military engineering, be a very efficient means for warding off the attacks of iron-clad vessels and *steam rams*; for, as to the steam ram, a ten inch gun that would carry a shell containing a gallon or two of the liquid, would with ordinary accuracy, be able at the distance of $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile, to envelop him in an atmosphere that would cause his inmates to be more anxious about their own safety than about the destruction of their enemy.

It may be asked if the gas which drove the enemy from his guns, would not prevent the attacking party who used the gas, from taking possession of the abandoned position. I answer it would not: for, this shell does not like the Chinese stink-pots, deposit a material emitting a deleterious gas *lighter* than the atmosphere, but suddenly projects into the air, a *free* gas much *heavier* than the atmosphere, which does its work as it descends to the earth, where it is soon absorbed.

Experiment alone can determine whether this shell has any practical merit. Possibly, I overrate its value; but it must not be forgotten, that while it does the work of an ordinary shell, it also carries with it a force against whose effect the most skillful military engineering can not possibly make any adequate provision.

As to the moral question involved in its introduction, I have, after watching the progress of events during the last eight months with reference to it, arrived at the somewhat paradoxical conclusion, that its introduction would very much lessen the sanguinary character of the battlefield, and at the same time render conflicts more decisive in their results——

If I have erred, I have, *at least* meant well——

Yours respectfully,

John W. Doughty.

Hon. Edwin M. Stanton
Sec. War, U.S.A.

April 5th/62, 419 Eighth Ave.,
New York.

Lincoln stopped and passed the letter to Secretary of State Seward, who sat next to him, with a motion to let it make the round. Then he continued:

"Mr. Doughty does not seem to be known as a leader in his profession, but I have submitted his idea to some of our best chemists and military experts, and they agree that it is entirely feasible. A few shells containing chlorine gas have already been cast and tested. They were dropped among a herd of cattle."

Lincoln stopped and wiped his glasses.

"With what result, Mr. President?" asked Mr. Welles, Secretary of the Navy.

"The cattle died." There was a slight pause, during which the President swallowed hard. "Died in painful convulsions. Their lungs were being destroyed with every breath they took of the poisonous gas."

Lincoln seemed to look for the right words with which to continue. "The question now, gentlemen," he finally said, "is whether or not we want to use this new invention against human beings. It will unquestionably win the war for us. Nevertheless, I would like to hear your opinions."

Secretary Stanton at once sprang to his feet. "There can be no doubt about what to do, I should think," he exclaimed. "A man who fights his government is a Rebel, and in my eyes no better than cattle, if that good. I move that we adopt this scheme, even though I don't believe it will finish the war. A war must be fought man against man, and none of these newfangled inventions impress me; but we can have enough of these chlorine shells on hand by fall to use them on every front."

Secretary Welles had listened with a frown to his colleague's harangue and was the next one to express his thoughts. He believed that the use of a poison gas violated the laws of God and of

humanity; also that it would antagonize world opinion. He wanted it known that his vote was a decisive No.

Lincoln now turned to General Halleck, his General in Chief and personal military adviser.

"General," he said, "we should like to hear from you."

Halleck rose heavily. His protruding eyes stared past the President; he rubbed his left elbow, cocked his head to one side and then spoke ponderously.

"Mr. President, there is nothing in any modern book on war which mentions the use of chemicals. Wars have been fought and won for centuries, and none of the successful generals"—here he gave McClellan a sidewise glance—"needed extraordinary weapons to come out on top. But, in this instance, matters being what they are, I am for using these shells."

"Thank you, General," Lincoln said. "Now will you let us have your views, General McClellan?"

McClellan, small but youthfully prim, addressed the President: "I am convinced that we can win this war with the weapons now at our command. Yet, why close our eyes to new methods of warfare? There was much criticism against gunpowder and bullets when they replaced bows and arrows. I have no doubt that there was the same kind of criticism against bows and arrows when they took the place of stones and slingshots. There always will be opposition to new inventions which kill and maim. Shall we ignore a gas shell because it is cruel? Undoubtedly it is painful to breathe chlorine, but do you imagine that it is less painful to have your chest torn by slugs of canister or split open by a bayonet?"

"Then I take it that you are in favor of using chlorine gas?" asked Lincoln.

"Yes, but I would impose two conditions—first, that we have enough of these shells on hand to make our initial attack sufficiently destructive to avoid making another; and second, that we use

them only in case of a most urgent emergency. If we can win the war quickly without them, so much the better."

The discussion which followed lasted a long time, and it was late in the evening when Lincoln closed the meeting. In the face of the two opposing opinions, which could not be reconciled, Lincoln took the decision in his own hands. The chlorine shells would be manufactured on a large scale, but were to be used only with his personal approval.

The summer and fall of 1862 had passed. Second Manassas and Antietam were already matters of history. Then, on December 13, Burnside attacked Lee on the hills near Fredericksburg and suffered one of the worst defeats of the war. Lincoln, after an evening at the War Department, where he had read the reports of the disaster, was walking the floor of the White House, sleepless, hopeless, desperate.

"What will the country say?" he kept murmuring. "What will the country say?"

A messenger arrived in haste and asked that Lincoln return to Stanton's office. With a vague foreboding of more evil news to come, the President walked over to the War Department to face again his Secretary of War and General Halleck. At his entrance both stood up. Stanton carefully closed the door and showed his chief a dispatch just received from the battlefield.

Hon. E. M. Stanton,
Washington, D. C.

In order to prevent a complete debacle I propose to renew attack tomorrow using gas shells. Immediate permission imperative.

Ambrose Burnside,
General Commanding.

Lincoln looked at Stanton and Halleck a long time without speaking, while he clutched the telegram in his strong hand. Then

he read it again, stepped to the window and looked out into the bleak winter night.

"Well, Mr. President, what is your decision?"

It was Stanton who had spoken. His tone was a mixture of deference, impatience and contempt.

Lincoln did not reply at once. His face was wrinkled in deep furrows, and he looked as if he were suffering from severe physical pain. At last he turned.

"Mr. Secretary," he said, "I wish to God I had never been called upon to make this decision. I cannot look at our enemies in the same light you do. They are men like ourselves, they have the same ancestors, the same history, and they pray to the same Deity. I cannot forget the look in the eyes of one young bull whom I watched dying after he had swallowed the gas. He seemed to say to me, 'How could you do a thing like that to a dumb animal and still call yourself an image of God?'"

Stanton opened his lips as if to speak, but it was Halleck who answered. "May I suggest, Mr. President," he said, "that you visit a battlefield sometime right after the fighting is over? You will see men writhing in agony, shot in the groin, or with their elbows shattered, or half of their face blown away, begging to be put out of their misery. Nothing can possibly be worse than that."

Lincoln shuddered and went back to the window. Minute after minute ticked away on the big clock on the wall. This time not even Stanton dared interrupt the President's thoughts. Suddenly Lincoln straightened himself up to his full height.

"Mr. Secretary, send a dispatch to General Burnside authorizing him to use gas shells." Then he walked toward the door.

"Just a moment, Mr. President," said Stanton in a silky voice. "I want you to see the dispatch and sign it."

Hastily the secretary wrote out the message and Lincoln affixed his signature. Then, without another word, he left.

If anyone had been watching, he would have seen a tall figure, bent forward, slowly making its way through the park which separated the War Department from the White House. Several times it stopped and turned as if to retrace its steps, but the movement was never completed. Eventually the stooped figure mounted the steps of the White House and disappeared behind the door.

An hour later there was great activity in Burnside's camps. Ammunition wagons with strange insignia were moving frontward to assigned positions. Whispered orders flew from one regimental commander to another. It was not until long after midnight that sleep settled again over the Union lines.

At the same time Lincoln had his conversation with Stanton and Halleck, General Lee and his lieutenants were holding a council of war in the tent of the commanding general. Looking back at the battle of the preceding day, they could well be satisfied. Even Lee's impassive face reflected that inward glow which comes from a task well performed. With an army considerably smaller than that of his opponent, he had beaten back the bravest and most furious attacks of Burnside's splendid host. The artillery on the heights above Fredericksburg, posted behind hastily erected breastworks, had decimated one Union division after another; what was left of them had been cut to pieces by infantry posted behind a stone fence which ran across a part of the field.

What would the next day bring forth? Lee's scouts had intercepted a message from Burnside to one of his corps commanders, indicating that the attack would be renewed in the morning; it could not end differently. The best course to follow therefore was to let the defenders remain where they were and let Burnside bleed himself white.

Stonewall Jackson and J. E. B. Stuart, who had been urging an attack the evening before, were not happy with this decision. De-

fense did not suit their temperaments, but after a spirited protest they admitted the force of their commander's arguments. There was no denying the logic of his conclusion. One more frontal attack against the Confederate positions, and Burnside's army was done for.

"By tomorrow afternoon," Lee said, "we will be the stronger of the two. Then, gentlemen, will be the time to take the offensive, and I hope we shall wipe Burnside and his army off the face of the earth."

With that final dictum the council broke up.

The morning of December 14, 1862, found the contending armies in the same positions they had occupied the night before; and, just as on the preceding day, the expected Union attack would probably again start with an artillery barrage. The Confederates were not much concerned about it. Four hundred guns, many of the heaviest caliber, had thundered against them for hours on December 13, yet the damage done had been slight.

General Lee was seated in his tent, eating a frugal breakfast, when the artillery fire started. As the first sounds reached his ears, he stopped eating and looked up in surprise. Turning to his aide, Colonel Charles Marshall, he remarked on the odd noise of the shells.

"They must be using a new kind," he said. "There is a whir to these missiles I have never heard before."

Colonel Marshall agreed with his chief, but observed that one could never tell about the sound of artillery fire. Some shells seemed to shriek, some to howl, some to moan. Perhaps the density of the air or the wind currents had something to do with it. He went on eating.

Suddenly there was a commotion outside the tent, and Lee in-

quired as to its cause. A moment later a captain stood before him, his face white, his eyes dilated in terror.

"General," he stammered, "they are shooting at us with something poisonous. Some of my men are coughing their lungs out, and the rest are stampeding."

There was no need for the officer to say more. Lee had stepped outside his tent to see for himself. Soldiers in small groups could be seen fleeing horror-stricken to the rear. They struggled blindly, chests heaving, faces an ugly purple color, lips speechless. Two stretcher-bearers passed by carrying a man in the uniform of a sergeant, who was coughing pitifully. His features were contorted with pain.

Lee stopped the sorry procession.

"What happened to you, Sergeant?" he asked in a kindly voice.

The sergeant looked up into the face of his beloved leader and made an effort to sit up, but a convulsive cough laid him low again. Mutely he pointed at his chest. The stretcher-bearers continued on their trip.

Lee wiped some tears from his eyes.

"Did you see the look in that man's eyes?" he asked Colonel Marshall. "Like that of a dumb animal asking its master for help."

This was no time, however, for human sympathy. More soldiers were throwing away their rifles and rushing to the rear. Officers tried to stop them, but were rudely pushed aside. A peculiar irritating odor came wafting up the hillside from the spot where the enemy's shells had struck the ground. Lee's eyes began to hurt, and Colonel Marshall was vainly trying to suppress a coughing spell.

"To the stone wall," Lee commanded sternly. "We shall find protection there." He pulled a handkerchief from his pocket and, holding it in front of his face, started downhill. The staff officers, following his example, scrambled after him. Shells fell all around

them and, upon exploding, emitted greenish billows of smoke which kept close to the ground, as they were blown along by the northern winds. Wherever this smoke reached a soldier, he was seized with a violent coughing fit, which went on and on until, livid in the face, he lost consciousness.

It was soon discovered that handkerchiefs offered only slight protection against the insidious enemy, and Lee ordered his men back to the top of the hill, where the air was still breathable. He himself wanted to see how things stood at the stone wall, but his entourage carried him bodily to the rear. One young officer volunteered to complete the mission. In a few minutes he returned, doubled up with pain, trying to speak coherently between attacks of coughing. Around Lee most of his commanding officers were now assembled—Generals Longstreet, Jackson, Stuart and others. Many of them also were coughing, and their eyes were bloodshot.

"Well?" Lee asked the returned officer, who spoke only with the greatest difficulty.

"General Lee," he gasped, "it is awful. The poor fellows are lying back of that fence in heaps. They can't live and they are not dead yet. I tell you . . ."

Tears were choking his voice. Perhaps he, too, had breathed too much of the deadly gas.

Lee's face remained calm, but something indefinable in his bearing showed that he felt the presence of a force against which he considered himself helpless.

"Is there a surgeon around?" he asked. "If so, send him here."

A few officers went in search of a doctor, but they soon came back from their fruitless endeavor. The entire battlefield was in utter confusion. Men were running wildly to the rear, insensible to remonstrances by their officers. A dispatch bearer, coming from the right wing, brought news of equal turmoil in that sector. How many other messages had been sent and not delivered, no one

would ever know. The most unnerving part of the picture was that not a single Union soldier was in sight. What the enemy had accomplished was due to his artillery fire only. A few hundred gas shells in a few minutes had done what nothing else had ever done before. They had brought the proudest army of the Confederacy to its knees.

A surgeon entered Lee's tent. His face was scratched, his eyes bulged from their sockets, his uniform was torn and his shirt hung in strips from his body. He answered the general's unspoken questions without prompting.

"They tore the very clothes from me in their pain and despair," he explained. "I could do nothing for them. Their lungs are going or gone. If I had had some morphine, I'd have given it all to them. The only thing I or any other doctor can do is to ease their death."

He broke into sobs and, shaking his fists at the distant Union guns, ran out.

Lee stepped into the open and looked over the field. Shells were still coming over, and the last of his men could be seen running from their posts or riding away on horses whose hastily cut traces showed how they had been acquired. Scores of big guns stood abandoned; their crews were either writhing on the ground or had vanished.

The general seemed unruffled, but as he spoke to Colonel Marshall his voice trembled.

"We retreat at once to Richmond," he said. "See to it that all the wounded are taken along. Please issue the necessary orders."

Around the parlor of President Davis' residence in Richmond sat a group of men. In the center stood General Robert E. Lee, who was addressing them. His flushed face mirrored the tremendous excitement under which he was laboring.

"That is the story, Mr. President," he concluded his remarks. "The enemy is advancing on this city without meeting resistance. What happened at Fredericksburg will happen again at other places, and the results will always be the same. The men know it and I cannot get them to make a stand. Burnside will be in Richmond in a matter of hours. We still may flee, but that would only postpone the end. We must face the inevitable."

No one seemed willing to say anything. Finally Jefferson Davis spoke.

"General, is there no hope, no way out of this predicament except surrender?"

"I know of none, Mr. President. My soldiers are the best in the world and will fight one against ten, if they must. But they cannot be made to fight an enemy they cannot see or a weapon against which they have no defense."

"Why can't we, too, develop gas shells and pay them back in their own coin?" The question came from a corpulent, dark-haired man around whose mouth fluttered a continuous smile. He was Judah Benjamin, Davis' Secretary of War.

"I suppose we could," Lee answered. "But we have no facilities, and it would take us months to get them, if we ever did."

President Davis broke into the discussion. "General Lee, you say this new weapon is no more inhumane than most other instruments of war. Why, then, will our men not stand up against it?"

"Because," Lee explained, "they have no way of protecting themselves; trenches, breastworks and other ordinary devices are useless against a gas attack. We cannot even hope to silence the Federal guns at a distance, because they shoot farther than ours. What frightens our troops most of all is not the kind of death they are forced to face. It is the fear of the unknown, the worst fear of all. There is nothing left for us but surrender." There was a catch in his voice that was indescribably pathetic.

"Surrender is unthinkable," cried Mr. Davis. "I will lead the men myself. I shall gladly die for the South, and thousands will follow me."

General Lee's eyes blazed up for a moment, but he spoke sedately. "It would be murder, Mr. President," he replied. "If you wish to lead men to the slaughter pen, you may do so, of course. As far as I am concerned, my resignation is in your hands."

"I shall not allow you to resign, General. We must find a means to combat this weapon, and at once. History shows that all new offensive weapons were soon met by some efficient defense—like the arrow by the shield. There must be a defense against chlorine gas."

General Lee stood very erect and a sad smile lighted up his face.

"You are quite right, Mr. President," he conceded, "ways and means will be found to formulate a defense against poison gases, but it will take time."

His eyes took on a dreamy look. "In fact," he continued in a low voice, "I believe this is only the beginning of a new era in warfare. Chemistry has marched into battle today; other sciences will follow. In a hundred years from today . . ."

Mr. Davis jumped up from his chair. "General Lee," he cried, "we are not concerned about what may happen a hundred years from now. The enemy is at the doors. I shall go out and fight them. You must fight at my side, die at my side if necessary. We will all die together."

A murmur of disapproval went through the room. It was difficult to say where it had started. Jefferson Davis cast a glance at the men present, but in no eyes did he see encouragement. He shook his head. His body sank forward in his chair, and he covered his face with his hands.

"Unconditional surrender," he moaned. "Unconditional surrender!"

1863

In which humor takes the place of grand strategy

IF A Confederate officer had seen through a simple hoax, Vicksburg would not have fallen on July 4, 1863, and the decline of the Confederacy in the West might have been delayed indefinitely.

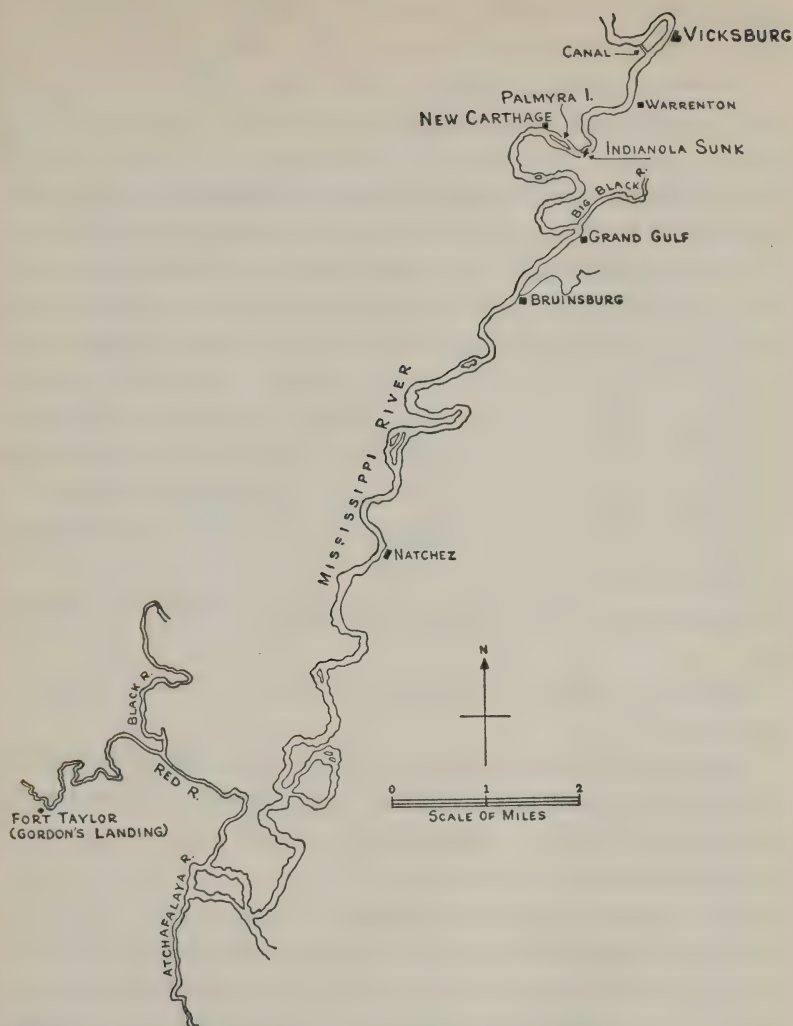
The cabin of Admiral David D. Porter was not as cozy a nook as usual that midwinter evening in 1863. Somehow the chill of the outside air seemed to have dispelled its homelike atmosphere. General Grant had just opened his headquarters near Vicksburg and, in company with General Sherman, had accepted Porter's invitation for a visit. He had listened to a report on the dismal situation and now responded moodily to the efforts of his host to keep up the conversation.

At last he took the cigar from his mouth and laid it on the table.

"Gentlemen," he said, "we are still up against the same problem which has faced us since the beginning. Here we are a few miles above Vicksburg, but unless we seize it, the Confederates in the West cannot be beaten. And no one has yet found a way to take that town."

"A frontal attack won't do it, that's sure," Sherman remarked. "I tried it last December, and I've learned my lesson. It was an expensive one."

"What makes me mad," Porter declared, "is the way these Rebel boats carry on their traffic on the Mississippi right under our noses.



THE MISSISSIPPI FROM VICKSBURG TO THE RED RIVER

The food they ship across from Texas, Arkansas and Louisiana is enough to keep the whole South going forever."

There was no answer to Porter's angry statement. They all knew

that what he said was only too true. Yet how could communication between the two enemy-held sides of the river be stopped?

Grant had started puffing his cigar again. Sherman had risen from his chair and was walking up and down the small room like a caged animal. The outlook was depressing. Vicksburg was built on high bluffs, surrounded by nearly impenetrable jungles and bayous, and had been fortified by the ingenuity of the best Southern military engineers, which added greatly to its natural strength. Innumerable batteries commanded an eight-mile stretch of the Mississippi and bade defiance to all comers. Over a hundred miles to the south Port Hudson stood guard and performed a similar duty. Between these two fortresses the river was in undisputed possession of the Confederates. Until that control was wrested from them, a land attack offered little or no hope for success.

Suddenly Admiral Porter hit the table with his fist. "I've got an idea," he exclaimed.

Sherman stopped in his interminable walk. "Out with it. What is it?"

Grant was holding the cigar in his hand and looked at Porter expectantly.

"Gentlemen," Porter said, "as you know, I'm dying to break up this river traffic, but I dare not risk my ships by running them past those blasted batteries. However, if I can't stop the traffic, I can at least disturb it."

"How do you propose to do that?" Grant asked.

"I'll send the *Queen of the West* down the river and turn her into a raider. Damned if I won't. She is one of the fastest ships I have, and just right for the purpose. Those Rebs have a surprise coming to them."

"How about the Vicksburg batteries?" Grant wanted to know.

"I'll chance them. If she gets hit we'll have her repaired down

the river at Warrenton, which is in our hands. From there she can travel on without danger."

"Whom would you put in command?" Sherman inquired.

"Colonel Ellet—Charles Rivers Ellet. He is just the man for the job."

Porter was waxing enthusiastic. "You recall that his father was among the first to conceive the idea of a river fleet. Too bad he had to be in on the battle at Memphis and get himself killed. But, of course, he wanted to see how his ships would perform."

"I know Charlie Ellet," Grant said, "but isn't he a bit young yet?"

"He is only twenty," Porter replied, "but there isn't a better officer anywhere. He will undertake anything I ask him to do without asking questions, and the only trouble I have with him is to hold him in. Yes, Ellet is the man for the job."

The proposed venture was discussed all evening, and when the meeting broke up Porter had Grant's permission to go ahead with it.

So it happened that on February 2, at the break of dawn, the *Queen of the West* started out on her perilous voyage. Ellet had intended to rush her past the Vicksburg batteries in the semidarkness of the early morning, but the steering apparatus did not function properly, and the sun was up before the adjustment was completed. Nothing daunted, the young commander steamed on, braved the murderous fire of the Confederate guns and steered straight for a wharf where a big Confederate transport, the *Vicksburg*, lay at anchor. It had been Ellet's intention to damage the enemy vessel by ramming it, but the current swung the *Queen's* stern around and the blow glanced off. At this moment two shells

passed through the *Queen's* improvised deck armor, consisting of cotton bales, setting some of them on fire. The flames themselves were not dangerous, but the acrid smoke drifted into the engine room and almost suffocated the men there. By this time hundreds of spectators had assembled on shore and watched the sharpshooters of the garrison sweep the deck of the *Queen* with well-directed fire from high positions on the hills. It was time for Ellet to leave and he did so hurriedly. He had been under fire for almost an hour, and the damage to his vessel was beginning to tell.

Not long after the *Queen* had got out of range, she began her real career as a raider. Her first victim was the *H. W. Baker*, returning empty from a trip to Vicksburg. Her captain, thinking that the *Queen* was a friendly ship, approached her; he was dumfounded to find her flying the Stars and Stripes. The *Baker* was followed by the *Moro*, which was transporting a hundred thousand pounds of pork, five hundred hogs and a large quantity of salt to the defenders of Port Hudson. Around the mouth of the Red River, the *Queen* encountered and captured the *Berwick Bay*, a small boat carrying two hundred barrels of molasses, sugar and flour.

All the captured vessels were much slower than the *Queen*, and Ellet sank them, rather than encumber himself with their company. On February 5, three days after his departure, he returned and landed at Warrenton, well below Vicksburg, under the protection of Union land troops.

The *Queen* now had almost run out of coal, but two days later gathered in a good supply of it which had been floated down to her on barges. On February 8 Ellet received new orders; he was to ascend the Red River. A small vessel, the *DeSoto*, a former ferry boat which had been imperfectly protected by cotton bales, was to accompany the expedition. Porter's instructions were summarized in this manner:

"The great object is to destroy all you can of the enemy's stores and provisions, and get your vessel back safe."

The two ships reached the Red River on February 10, and two days later branched off on a tributary, the Atchafalaya, where their crews spread consternation among the natives and managed to burn a Confederate wagon train. Returning, they ascended another tributary, the Black River, and there met a small boat, the *Era No. 5*, which came down unsuspectingly; it surrendered with its cargo of forty-five hundred bushels of corn. But the capture was to prove a costly success. It so happened that a Mr. Scott Long, whom Ellet had engaged as pilot, and about whose loyalty there was no doubt, had fallen sick. When the crew of the *Era* told of a few large steamers lying at Gordon's Landing, thirty miles upstream, Ellet decided to capture them. He impressed the *Era's* pilot, a Mr. Garvey, who was only too happy to oblige. The two Union vessels then slowly steamed up to Gordon's Landing, until they could see black smoke beyond a bend. The steamers were evidently getting ready to escape. Mr. Garvey was ordered to slow down and advance only far enough to allow Ellet to look over the situation. According to information received, Gordon's Landing was defended by rows of batteries, known as Fort Taylor, but the crew of the *Era* had reported that only two guns had been mounted so far and that the garrison consisted of conscripts who would refuse to fight.

Ellet soon discovered what the truth was, but by then it was too late. The *Queen* had scarcely pushed her bow around the bend when a row of guns let go at her with terrific blasts and at the exact range. The pilot, instead of backing away, ran the ship aground on the opposite shore, where every shot struck her squarely. One pierced her sides and an explosion cut her steam pipes. The *Queen*, rendered helpless, had to be left to her fate.

For a moment Ellet considered blowing her up to keep her out of enemy hands; then he remembered that he had on board a wounded brother officer, Captain James D. Thompson. He ordered the yawl to be made ready for the injured man, but in the prevailing panic someone had appropriated it. Reluctantly Ellet gave the order "Abandon Ship," and had cotton bales thrown into the river as life preservers. Then he said good-by to Captain Thompson, requested the ship's surgeon to stay with the patient and jumped overboard.

The *DeSoto* had come up as far as she dared; she picked up the survivors, including Mr. Garvey, the pilot, who told a plausible story when asked to explain his action. He now took charge of the rescue ship, which raced downstream to get out of harm's way; but soon she lost a rudder. Again Garvey explained the mishap away, blaming it on the fog, and Ellet transferred his men to the *Era No. 5*. This little, one-hundred-ton vessel, crowded to the rails with the crews of three ships, soon ran out of fuel. Ellet made the firemen burn corn under the boilers. The *Era* reached the Mississippi at dawn next morning, and everyone felt relieved. She drew only two feet of water, and the much-dreaded sandbanks would have no terror for her. But Mr. Garvey did not depend on sandbanks alone. He stayed close to shore, and suddenly the ship was hard aground. Even then Garvey might again have talked himself out of his latest predicament had he not permitted the paddle wheels to turn several times after striking bottom. He was arrested, put in irons, and the wheel passed into less experienced, but more trustworthy hands.

On the following day, the lookout reported a large gunboat approaching from the North. It proved to be the U.S.S. *Indianola*, sent to the support of the *Queen of the West*. The *Indianola* was one of the most modern and formidable ironclads of Porter's fleet. Unlike most other gunboats she was not a converted freighter, but

had been specially built during the war. She was one hundred seventy-four feet long and carried a crew of a hundred and twenty men. Her sides consisted of thirty-two-inch thick oak, covered with three-inch iron plates. The entire machinery was in the hold and was heavily protected. The side wheels and propellers received their power from four engines, and three others supplied steam for various other purposes, one of which was an apparatus by means of which scalding water could be thrown on a boarding party.

The *Indianola* acted as escort for the little *Era* and was a most welcome companion for her crew, who were generously fed, and for her officers, who were invited to the captain's cabin to partake of his "good cheer."

The *Era* was provided with fuel from two coal barges which the rescue ship had brought along, and proceeded north to her former berth at Warrenton, while the *Indianola* turned around to rescue the *Queen* and, if that should be impossible, to avenge her.

At this juncture Captain George Brown of the *Indianola* made a fateful decision. Instead of accompanying the *Era* No. 5 in quest of aid, he determined to recapture the *Queen* unassisted. He had ascended the Red River some twenty miles, when he learned that the coveted boat had been taken upstream to Alexandria, out of his reach. Regretfully he retraced his course and began his homeward cruise. By this time he also realized that a single warship in enemy waters was dangerously exposed, and he hoped that Admiral Porter would think likewise and was even then sending reinforcements down the river. The new arrivals would need fuel, hence it would be well to keep the two loaded coal barges lashed to the ship's sides. This was the captain's second decision and, like the first, it was to prove ill-advised. He did not know that up on the Red River an expedition was being fitted out to overtake the *Indianola* which, unaware of her danger, was

leisurely steaming up the Mississippi. Slowed down by the drag of the barges, it was not until February 24 that she passed Grand Gulf.

In the meantime the *Queen of the West* had been fully repaired, and on February 19 she hoisted the Confederate battle flag. Immediately she was made part of the flotilla which set out in pursuit of the *Indianola*. Accompanying her were the gunboat *William H. Webb*, the steamer *Dr. Beatty* and the tender *Grand Era*. The two auxiliary boats carried two hundred and fifty soldiers, who were to serve as sharpshooters or as a boarding party, according to conditions.

When the Confederates reached the Mississippi, they heard that the *Indianola* was forty-eight hours ahead of them; at Natchez, on February 23, the distance had been reduced to twenty-four hours. The chase could easily have ended on the morning of the twenty-fourth, but Major J. L. Brent, who was in command, determined to wait until nightfall, to minimize the effect of the *Indianola's* superior firing power.

At 9:10 that evening Captain Brown saw the smoke of the pursuing vessels. He steered for the western shore, so as to land his crew on Union-occupied ground in case of defeat, and prepared for action. The spot where he decided to make his stand was near the foot of Palmyra Island, just above the town of New Carthage. The two barges were still lashed to his ship. Although their retention had failed in its original purpose, they might still be useful as supplementary protection against ramming.

The moon was partially obscured by clouds, but permitted sufficient light to let the crew of the *Indianola* make out the battle order of Brent's fleet, which was approaching with all its lights covered. The *Queen of the West*, the strongest of the ships, led the advance by five hundred yards, and was followed by the

doughty *Webb*. The *Dr. Beatty* brought up the rear, towed by the *Grand Era*.

When the *Queen* was within one hundred yards, she opened fire with two twenty-pounder Parrott guns and one Cross twelve-pounder, but the missiles proved ineffective against the *Indianola*'s strong armor. Then the *Queen* charged with all the speed she could muster. Her bow went crashing through one of the barges and its pile of coal, so that by the time she struck the *Indianola*, the force of the impact was partially broken, although still strong enough to throw the crews of both boats to the floor. The *Queen* herself was now in utmost peril, being held fast against the side of the *Indianola*. Try as she might to back out, she was wedged in, unable to free herself. Just when she expected to be destroyed by gunfire, one end of the barge sank, and the other drifted down the current. The *Queen* sped away, upstream, to repeat her attack, this time with the current behind her. The impatient *Webb* had been waiting for such an opening. Putting on full steam, she plunged into the exposed side of the *Indianola* just in rear of the ship's bow. In return she received, at a distance of seventy-five yards, the fire of two eleven-inch guns. From outward appearances, neither of the boats had suffered great damage, but the *Webb*, which had swung around until she lay almost alongside of her opponent, had no taste for a broadside and made haste to dash off. Skillfully forcing her bow between the *Indianola* and the remaining coal barge, she broke its fastenings and set it adrift. The *Indianola* was now without outward protection and evidently had also suffered some injury to her steering apparatus, for her movements from then on began to be less rapid and precise.

The *Queen* was now rounding to for her second charge. She came rushing on, trying to ram the *Indianola* amidships, but the latter managed to swing her bow around, and the collision pro-

duced little damage. Before the *Queen* could get away, she was fired on at such close distance that the belching flames from the *Indianola's* gun muzzles almost touched her. Two shots struck home, one knocking over a dozen cotton bales on deck, the other entering a porthole, killing two men and disabling a battery.

As if enraged by these wounds, the *Queen* quickly returned to a third charge, and this time she crashed through the *Indianola's* framework and loosened some iron plates. But the *Queen* herself did not escape unhurt. The shifting of the cotton bales had already unbalanced her, and the collision caused her to list so heavily that one of her wheels was raised out of the water, making her almost unmanageable. Turning slowly around, she made room for the *Webb*, which hit the *Indianola* at top speed and in the same spot. This time the crash was fatal. Prying aside the armor plates, the *Webb* tore through the timber as if she was going to cut her adversary in half.

The *Indianola* had enough. With whatever speed was left in her, she headed downstream, intending to try for a landing at the western shore. A line was thrown out, but before it could be fastened, the enemy once more was upon her. It was the *Webb* which again bore down to the attack. She also had suffered severely, having had her bow knocked off, but she was still full of fight. The last blow, however, which might have shattered both ships, was never delivered. The *Webb* heard herself hailed from the deck of the *Indianola*. Captain Brown was ready to surrender. His ship was sinking, and he requested to be towed ashore. During the entire battle he alone had been on deck. His men had been ordered under cover; even the pilots, enclosed in bullet-proof turrets, had not been allowed to leave their posts to improve their vision. Brown had exposed himself recklessly, as if to atone for his errors of judgment, which had led to the loss of his ship. When the firing ceased, it was found that in spite of the furious

fighting, which had lasted for one hour and twenty-seven minutes, the casualties on both sides were slight.

By this time the *Dr. Beatty* had come up, and the exhausted Confederates let her take charge of the prize. The *Indianola* was towed across to the eastern shore to prevent her being retaken by Federal land forces, but her valuable cargo of arms and medical supplies could not be removed. She sank up to her gun deck, almost in front of a plantation belonging to Joseph Davis, brother of the Confederate President.

After the capture of the *Indianola* the victors inspected their trophy and were greatly impressed by the strength of her armament. The thick iron plating had proved impenetrable to the heavy Confederate artillery at very close range. An eighty-pound shell fired at twenty or thirty yards had utterly failed to injure her. There was no doubt that the *Indianola* stood in a class by herself and would prove a most valuable flagship for the Southern Navy in the Mississippi.

Admiral Porter, although still ignorant of the *Indianola's* defeat, contemplated his position with considerable misgivings. He knew that eventually he would have to move his entire fleet down the river, if Vicksburg was to be taken, and every day the passing of that fortress was becoming more hazardous. The successful running of the batteries by the *Queen of the West* and the *Indianola* had impelled the Confederate commander to stud every level spot on the hillsides with guns. At the water's edge piles of wood were ready to be set afire at the first alarm, and old frame houses were marked as torches when needed. As a consequence, the entire S curve of the Mississippi in sight of the town would be lighted up at night so as to turn every ship into a perfect target. To make matters worse, the heavily armored ironclads could not

travel fast; in fact, a soldier's bon mot had it that in going downstream under full power, they could hardly keep up with the speed of the current.

Porter wondered whether the number of guns which were sure to pepper his fleet could not be reduced somehow. A land attack was not yet to be thought of, and a bombardment from the river was equally out of the question. He had received reports, however, that the batteries were manned by inexperienced crews who became easily excited, and that during the recent passage of his two war vessels several of the guns had burst. This was interesting, if true. To make sure, Porter sent a monitor within firing range and noted that the Confederates shelled it vehemently. If given an inviting target, the batteries might weaken themselves to a point of comparative impotence. But as Porter could not spare sufficient boats for such a sacrifice, the scheme died a-borning.

Then a sudden thought struck the worried Union admiral. Why not rig up an imitation battleship to draw the fire? It would have to be of such large proportions that all of Vicksburg's guns would go into action, and it must travel slowly enough to induce a big expenditure of ammunition. The number of guns doomed to self-destruction would have to be left to the Goddess of Chance.

No sooner had the idea been conceived than it was executed. The huge joke was lustily cheered by the soldiers who had been driven to despair by inactivity, ennui, wet camps and fevers. Everybody went to work with a laugh. A raft of logs, three hundred feet in length, was used as a foundation. An old coal barge formed the mock monitor's hull. In twelve hours a most formidable looking battleship was ready to be launched. The men quickly found a name for her—the *Black Terror*. Lying low in the water, she seemed to house an enormous interior. Two wheel-

houses, made of thin boards, stood on her quarterdeck, and two leaky canoes hung on davits, apparently ready to be lowered in case of trouble. In the center two high smokestacks, built of pork barrels, indicated great propelling power. Out of mud the men built ovens in which to burn tar and damp oakum to provide an abundance of smoke. The wooden planks which formed the sides were laid at a rakish angle, as if challenging enemy guns to try their shells and solid shot against them. But most awe-inspiring of all was a row of enormous wooden Quaker guns protruding from the *Black Terror's* bow and portholes. A thick coating of tar made her look like a pirate ship, which caused a jokester to hoist on her the black banner of the skull and crossbones; it almost obscured the United States flag which fluttered in her rear rigging. On the wheel, instead of a name, appeared a short warning: "De-luded Confederates, Cave In."

Not the slightest rumor of the contemplated hoax had reached the enemy scouts, when on February 26, 1863, she was gently shoved out into the stream. It was an hour before dawn. Before she reached the upper river batteries the Confederates espied her and began to fire vigorously. In a few minutes the entire shore was ablaze. The long-prepared bonfires were kindled, lighting up the whole width of the river, and every gun sent forth deadly missiles. Strangely enough, the guns of the black specter did not reply. It kept on its course majestically, keeping pace with the current. Shot after shot found its mark on its hull, its deck, its pilothouse, but the effect was nil. That they went through the *Black Terror* as through pasteboard remained hidden from the eyes of the gunners.

Horried whispers flew from one end of the batteries to the other. This was not an ordinary ship, it was a new secret weapon. Perhaps what they were firing on was a phantom ship, a modern

Flying Dutchman. Some, more sober-minded, questioned the supernatural origin of the monster; but there could be no doubt that it was invulnerable.

Whatever fear possessed the defenders of Vicksburg, however, their fire did not slacken. On the contrary—"Never," Porter wrote with a sly smile, "did the batteries open with such a din; the earth fairly trembled, and the shot flew thick. . . ."

By now the sun had risen and the Union troops on the Louisiana side of the river, aroused by the unusually heavy fire, crowded to the bank and were informed of what was transpiring. Their loud laughter mingled with the thunder of the guns and the cries of dismay from the opposite side. Finally the riddled hulk, hugging the friendly western shore, glided past and slowly disappeared around a bend. There the dummy warship met with a new adventure.

The *Queen of the West*, following the surrender of the *Indianola*, had been ordered on patrol duty, while the latter was being repaired. Attracted by the cannonade, the *Queen* cautiously steamed upstream. The lookout scanned the river ahead and let out a startled yell. What he saw was a giant gunboat sailing past the Vicksburg batteries, contemptuous of their concentrated fire. The officers of the Confederate boat rushed on deck and concluded that the *Black Terror* had held her fire because she was looking for the *Queen*. The enormous gun in the bow seemed to be pointed straight at her. These officers were brave men, who had been in many battles, but they knew that the *Queen* was no match for such an adversary. Like Hector on the approach of Achilles, they were frightened nearly out of their wits. As old warriors they knew when a quick retreat was in order. The *Queen* was turned around in record time, and under all the steam her frantic firemen could produce, hurried to put distance between

herself and her eerie pursuer. In passing the stranded *Indianola*, she did not stop, but managed to convey to her a signal of distress, which was either not understood or not believed. Not until the *Queen* had reached the mouth of the Red River and began to ascend its waters did her commander feel that he had found a safe place of refuge. A boat of such large size as her pursuer could not follow her there.

The *Black Terror*, having floated safely beyond the range of the batteries, now suddenly veered toward the Louisiana shore. Caught by the whim of an eddy, she made a perfect landing, and was greeted jubilantly by a group of Union soldiers who had gathered to watch the strange sight. By this time it was broad daylight, and undoubtedly Confederate eyes also were focused on the ghost-like boat and the welcome accorded her. From afar it must have looked as if she were changing crews for new undertakings. When the Union soldiers had satisfied their curiosity, the *Terror* was guided back into the stream and entered on the final phase of her extraordinary career.

Not far down the river lay the *Indianola*, now in charge of a Confederate lieutenant and one hundred men. They had been awakened by a courier from Vicksburg who brought news of the monster ship through which shells passed with no more damage than if they had been shot through air. The *Queen of the West* had evidently tried to convey the same report, but had been in too great a hurry to make herself clear. The courier carried an order from headquarters to blow up the *Indianola*, should the *Terror* come into sight. But the lieutenant, young as he was, kept his head better and longer than his superiors. He waited until the *Black Terror* actually was in sight. Then he gave her one glance, laid his two magnificent eleven-inch guns muzzle to muzzle and fired them. One of the guns was a total wreck, the other was only kicked

over, victor in one of the queerest duels on record. Then he gave the signal to set the boat on fire, and fled without further ceremony, all of his men following after him.

A short time later another courier arrived from Vicksburg with new instructions. The true character of the mock gunboat had at last been discovered, and he was sent to countermand the first order and save the *Indianola*. It was too late. When he reached the wreck, it was gone beyond hope. Slowly he retraced his steps to report the sad tidings.

But the *Black Terror* had now also reached the end of her short though exciting life. She drifted a short distance past the *Indianola*, then caught fire. Built of light wood, and with no one to aid her, it was only a matter of minutes before she burned to the water's edge and sank. The skull and crossbones, so some said, waved derisively in the breeze long after the hull had disappeared under the murky waters of the Mississippi.

When it became known in the South that one of the finest prizes of the war had been lost by a practical joke, humiliation found its outlet in virulent editorials. The *Jackson Mississippian* remarked sarcastically that the *Queen of the West* had left the *Indianola* in such a panic that she forgot part of her crew. The *Richmond Examiner*, on March 7, 1863, noted that the fate of the *Indianola* was more disgraceful than farcical. "Here was perhaps the finest iron-clad in western waters," the editorial read, "captured after a heroic struggle, rapidly repaired and destined to join the *Queen of the West* in a series of victories. Next we hear that she was 'blown up.' Laugh and hold your sides . . . oh, Yankeedom! Blown up, because, forsooth, a flat-boat or mud-scow . . . is floated down the river! Truly an excellent joke!"

The *Courier* of Charleston, South Carolina, carried an article with the title "Yankee Craft," a rather appropriate pun. "The

base race, whom we are warring with," the editor wrote plantively, "are capable of doing us more harm by . . . subtlety . . . than by . . . valor."

The loss of the *Indianola* effectively broke the backbone of the Southern naval force on the Mississippi. The *Queen of the West* never again ventured out of the Red River, and a few weeks later, threatened by capture, was blown up by her own crew. The *Webb* also disappeared from view, but survived the war, only to be caught after Lee's surrender in an attempt to carry cotton abroad. She too was ordered sunk by her own officers.

What would have happened to Grant's campaign if the *Indianola* had not been destroyed? Vicksburg, inaccessible from the North, could only be taken if a foothold south of it were gained, and that was possible only by sending boats down the river. The shore batteries, as had been demonstrated, offered no insurmountable obstacle, but after the fleet had passed them, it would be badly battered and scarcely in a condition to fight three vessels of such caliber as the *Indianola*, the *Queen of the West* and the *Webb*.

The lieutenant in charge of the *Indianola*, whose name has not been preserved, simply obeyed orders, but he could have made himself immortal, had he not let himself be victimized by the *Black Terror*. If he had sent out his own scouts while the dummy was stranded a short distance away, instead of listening to a terror-tinted report, he could have delayed the fall of Vicksburg for weeks, perhaps for months. Many things might have happened in that period, and one of them alone could have been decisive. General John C. Pemberton, the inept Confederate commander, might for instance have been replaced by General Joseph Johnston, who was recovering from a recent illness, and that redoubtable strate-

gist, given time and reasonable luck, could have completely changed the fortunes of war on the western battlefront. But aside from this conjecture and others, equally intriguing, the mere delay in the fall of Vicksburg would have strengthened the Confederacy, which would then have escaped the utterly demoralizing impact of two major defeats in one day. The South might have weathered Gettysburg or Vicksburg alone, but not both. The foreign countries, England and France in particular, wrote off the Confederacy after July 4, 1863.

No other ruse in the Civil War, perhaps in any modern war, was as pregnant with fateful consequences as that of the ghost ship which the Union soldiers had so aptly christened "*The Black Terror*."

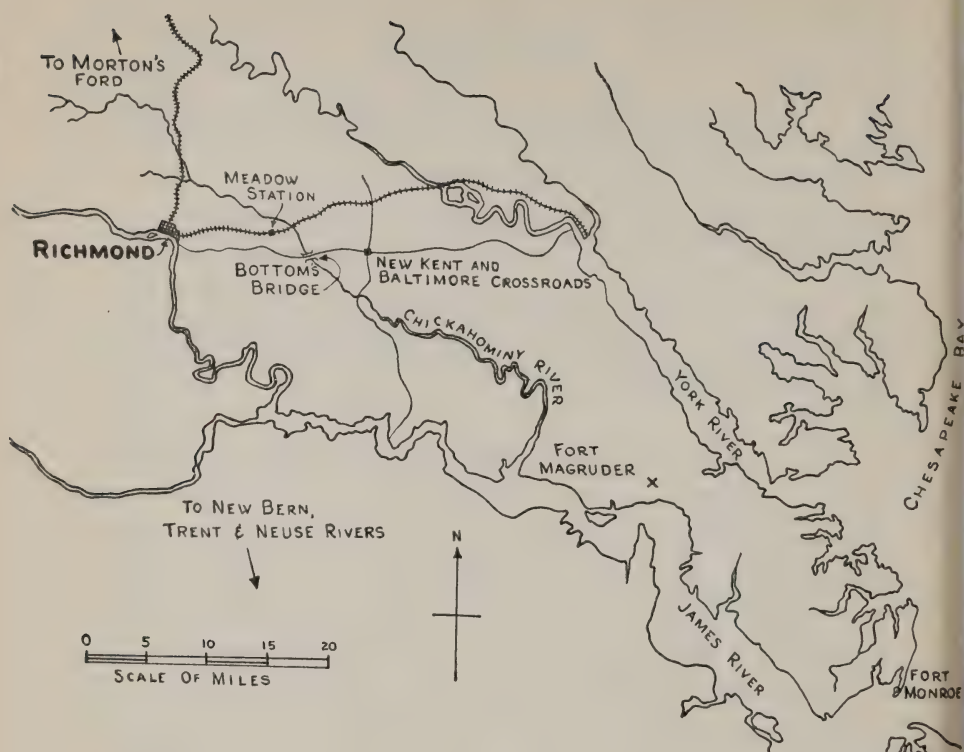
1863-1864

In which a dishonorable soldier kills a Presidential aspiration

IF A DEPRAVED private soldier had not killed one of his officers, Federal troops might have entered Richmond in 1864 and changed the course of the war.

Major General Benjamin F. Butler sat at the desk in his simply furnished headquarters at Fort Monroe, and stared disgustedly at the papers in front of him. With a gesture of impatience he signed a few routine reports and requisitions. At the bottom of the pile he came to two sentences of courts-martial, with death warrants attached. He smiled mirthlessly. He would not be so lenient as his predecessors had been. In a territory where little fighting was going on, the soldiers always thought of devilish things to do. Well, he would soon stop that. The Department of Virginia and North Carolina, of which he recently had been appointed commanding general, should feel his iron hand. The spring campaigns of 1864 would begin in a few months, and it was time that discipline was rigidly enforced. He took his pen and signed away the lives of the two men. They were not the first to die before one of his firing squads, and they would not be the last. He was ready to sign death warrants again and again, until the department knew its master.

Butler could boast of a colorful past. He had been a practicing lawyer, but had taken a lively interest in politics from an early age. In 1853 he was elected to the Massachusetts House of Representa-



BUTLER'S ATTEMPT TO CAPTURE RICHMOND

tives and to the State Senate in 1859. He professed to be a champion of labor and of the Catholic Church. Although a staunch believer in the Union, he had voted fifty-seven times for Jefferson Davis as President in the Democratic Convention of 1860, and after seceding from the Baltimore meeting he supported Breckenridge and Lane on the Democratic ticket.

When civil war seemed inevitable, Butler outfitted the 8th Massachusetts Volunteers and became its colonel. Since then he had rolled up a spectacular, although somewhat checkered, mili-

tary record. He had made headline news by setting out for Washington with his regiment only two days after Lincoln's call for seventy-five thousand volunteers. At that time the capital had been bare of troops, and his quick action elicited well-deserved praise. A few months later Butler had taken it upon himself to free fugitive slaves by declaring them contraband, a term which persisted throughout the war. That he had greatly embarrassed Lincoln by making a decision involving a matter of Presidential policy did not worry him, for he was in the habit of ignoring other people's sensibilities. He had moved back into the headlines when, as military governor of New Orleans, he hanged a Southern patriot for taking down the United States flag. He almost caused international complications when he insulted the women of that proud port city by threatening to treat them as prostitutes if they did not stop insulting Union officers. To the sobriquet of "Beast," which this decree had earned him, was subsequently added that of "Silver Spoon," because he was said to have stolen valuable tableware from the private home in which he made his headquarters. Other charges of gross dishonesty had been leveled against him and his brother without, however, ruffling his equanimity. The hatred which the South entertained for him was succinctly expressed by President Jefferson Davis; he declared Butler as "outside the rules of war."

Public opinion had finally caused Lincoln to transfer Butler to the Department of Virginia and North Carolina. Did this appointment really mean a step forward? Butler was doubtful. How was he going to win a military success on this tip of the Virginia peninsula where all he could do was to stand guard, like a sentinel in front of a deserted building? The lower peninsula was no longer a battleground, and there was little hope that it ever would be again. The Eastern campaigns were being waged between Lee and Meade on the roads from Washington to Richmond, and that left Butler very much on the side lines. He wondered if Lincoln, that

shrewd clown whom no one could ever quite figure out, had not stuck him into this God-forsaken spot to bury him alive.

As he took stock of his future prospects, his unprepossessing, sensuous features assumed a still more repulsive appearance. What he secretly aspired for was the Vice-Presidency of the United States. His chances, he concluded, were good. He was a War Democrat whose loyalty could not be questioned, and he knew that Lincoln desired a Democrat as running mate for the 1864 campaign. Himself a New England man, he could step into the shoes of the present incumbent, Hannibal Hamlin, of Maine, without disturbing a delicate political balance. His name had been on everyone's lips since the days of Fort Sumter, but he knew that the kind of publicity he had received so far, while widespread and on the whole favorable, was not enough to boost him into the Vice-Presidential chair. What he needed was a sensational triumph in the field. If he could achieve that, his nomination was assured. In the meantime, the strict discipline he was installing would have to compensate for his lack of military opportunities.

The entrance of an adjutant broke into Butler's meditations. The officer was holding a dispatch in his hand and presented it with a salute. Impetuously Butler snatched it from his hand and tore it open. It was marked "Executive Mansion, Washington, D.C." and had been sent the day before, December 10, 1863.

Please suspend execution in any and all sentences
of death in your department until further order.

A. Lincoln

Butler stormed. What did that soft-hearted old man in the White House know about conditions in the field? If you could not shoot some of this riffraff which had no sense of law and order, they would run away with you. This silly dispatch could only have

originated in Lincoln's own mind; he must have sent it without the knowledge, probably even over the protest of Edwin M. Stanton, the Secretary of War, and Henry W. Halleck, the General in Chief.

Butler was still debating in his mind how he could get around this Presidential order when a guard announced the arrival of a caller. A few moments later Brigadier General I. J. Wistar appeared in the doorway. He was an able officer and Butler's friend, at present in command of Fort Magruder, an outlying fortification near Williamsburg. The two officers met with outstretched hands, and Butler bade the visitor make himself at home. After a few minutes of idle talk the conversation turned from routine matters into more intimate channels. As Butler listened attentively, his interest mounted. Wistar had brought with him a strange and bold plan, one which seemed made to order for Butler's mood and ambition. He proposed nothing less than a surprise raid on Richmond. No permanent occupation was intended, of course, for no Union army to support such an enterprise was within reach. But even so the proposal seemed preposterous, for the enemy capital was well garrisoned. All the men Butler could have detached would not amount to a division, but even they could not be spared as New Bern, in North Carolina, one of his outposts, was then being threatened by a large Confederate force under General George Pickett, and its defending officer, General John M. Palmer, was clamoring for help. So far Butler had not seen his way clear to deplete his own forces for the relief of the besieged town, and had told Palmer to fight it out the best way he could. With what then did Wistar expect him to start an offensive on the Virginia peninsula?

Wistar had listened to this harangue without interruption, but the confident smile with which he had presented his plan had never left his lips. He spoke up as soon as Butler paused. If

Pickett had taken a large force to New Bern, he argued, so much the better, because he could only have taken them from around Richmond; moreover, the longer he stayed away, the longer Butler's expedition would be safe from interference. So far as the over-all situation was concerned, it could not be more favorable for the enterprise. Lee was being held fast on the Rapidan by Meade's Army of the Potomac, and with Pickett absent on a senseless excursion, who was there to stop Wistar from walking straight into Jefferson Davis' stronghold?

Butler was convinced. He leaned back in his chair, closed his eyes happily and drew a deep breath. He had always been able to hear opportunity when it knocked at his door. Now it was knocking again. This was the great chance for which he had been hoping. He felt that he was about to execute the biggest coup of his career. He would accomplish with a few thousand men what the great McClellan had been unable to do with an army of a hundred thousand.

First, however, the exact state of affairs in Richmond had to be ascertained. Paper calculations were all right in their way, but they would have to be substantiated by facts. How many troops really were inside the Confederate capital? How close was their nearest support? Butler was not going to put his head into a lion's mouth, unless he knew the number of the animal's teeth and the strength of its jaws.

Fortunately, there were means of finding such things out. Butler had a few trustworthy spies in Richmond, and they had devious but effective ways of communicating with him. Three of these secret-service men moved in army circles and picked up much pertinent information. He knew them as Palmer, Holmes and Quaker; what their real names were did not matter. They came and went, only they could tell wherefrom and whereto.

Then there was always Elizabeth Van Lew, that queer North-

ern-bred woman, who lived in a stately mansion on Church Hill and who bragged openly about her loyalty to the Union. She had been born in Virginia, the only child of a Pennsylvania merchant who had acquired his wealth in the South during the prewar years and had left it to his daughter. "Crazy Betsy" they called her, because she told quaint stories about secret chambers, tunnels and such, but above all she liked to talk of her spy activities. Whether her brazen behavior denoted shrewdness or dumbness, no one could rightly guess. She had been sending letters in invisible ink to Butler ever since he had taken command at Fort Monroe, but they contained mostly items copied from the Richmond press. The papers themselves reached Butler regularly a day or two after they were on sale in the Richmond streets, far ahead of Miss Van Lew's letters, and that worthy lady could have saved herself much unnecessary work and risk, had she kept herself better informed on this point. Butler had never met her. Perhaps she was not overly bright, but in the present situation even she might be useful. Hence, when the regular secret agents in Richmond were alerted in January 1864, word was also slipped to her. *How many troops would be in and around Richmond on Sunday, February 7?* This was the all-important question. Butler was quite willing to spur her and her confreres to their best efforts by offering them rewards, for as a gross materialist he firmly believed that with the majority of people money was a greater incentive than patriotism. On February 2, he forwarded a significant dispatch to Lincoln's Secretary of the Treasury Salmon Chase.

If you will send me one hundred thousand dollars (100,000.00) more Confederate money, I think I can dispose of it to the benefit of the Government.

Chase would understand.

In the meantime preparations for the raid were made in secrecy

but with great thoroughness. For the cavalrymen the best horses were selected. Information was gathered and collated on the location of enemy pickets, telegraph connections, the depth of the water in the Chickahominy River, the condition of the bridges and the fords. On February 2, General Wistar reported that Bottom's Bridge, over which his men would have to cross, was passable and that it was being guarded by a picket of only twenty men, with two hundred to three hundred more in reserve about a mile away. It would take the Confederates, even if they could use their telegraph lines, about one and a half hours to organize their forces, and as the distance from the bridge to the square in Richmond was only eleven miles, the Union troops would get there first; nevertheless, General Wistar had promised two hundred and fifty dollars each to two Virginians serving under him, if they cut important wires. Of course, even so the enterprise was hazardous, but—"Only one thing is absolutely certain," he wrote to Butler, "and that is that we can't accomplish anything worth while without some risk, and that we can't do it if we don't try."

On February 3, in the midst of all these preparations, Butler received a message from General Palmer. As he read the words, his heavy-lidded eyes brightened with pleasure. The Confederates were attacking New Bern! Could any news have been more welcome? Palmer estimated the forces opposing him at fifteen thousand, but Butler knew they did not add up to more than half that number. There was no real danger for Palmer. New Bern was situated between two rivers, the Neuse and the Trent, and was almost inaccessible. Palmer's four thousand men had only to defend two narrow roads, which should be easy. That the enemy had left his capital almost unprotected showed that Jefferson Davis did not think much of Butler's ability as a fighter. Well, he would soon find out. Butler rubbed his hands in undisguised glee.

Pickett's voluntary withdrawal to another theater of war, so fortunately timed, gave Butler another idea. How would it be if he could stir up some commotion along the Rapidan, so as to keep Lee busy and prevent him from accidentally sending a few battalions where they would be in Wistar's way?

Without hesitation he sent duplicate wires to Secretary of War Stanton and to General in Chief Halleck. He started out by making a routine report on the Confederate attack at New Bern, and then added: "Now is the time if ever for General Meade to move. The roads are practicable. That will relieve North Carolina at once, and leave a movement for me of which I spoke to you." He failed to mention that he did not really want North Carolina relieved *at once*. Let the Confederates enjoy a temporary success there, if they could bring it about. Their cheers would not last long.

On the same day he wired to Halleck that he had decided to make his surprise raid on Sunday, February 7, and again asked: "Why can't Meade move on Friday?"

Secret messages, written in cipher and delivered by messengers, began to arrive at Butler's headquarters. The male spies sent word that no portion of Lee's army was left in Richmond, and that the garrison had been reduced to the City Battalion and two Maryland companies, at best a few hundred men. From Miss Van Lew came a voluble letter, giving little information of value, but much unasked-for military advice: the attempt should be made with no less than thirty thousand cavalry. How and where to get that many she did not say. Instead, she accompanied her communication with cryptic admonitions. "Beware of new and rash council. Beware! This I send you by direction of all your friends."

Butler now was anxious to hear from General Meade. A diversion on the Rapidan would be of great help. Why were people

so slow in answering? Again he bent over his thumbled map and, for the hundredth time, passed his stubby finger over the roads which Wistar would use. If everything went well, his six thousand men should reach the center of Richmond early Sunday morning; they might then safely stay in the city three or four hours before their return was endangered. Much could be done in that short space of time. As first and most important Butler had listed a speedy release of the Union prisoners; as second the capture of Jefferson Davis and his Cabinet. One of the Confederate President's gardeners had deserted to the Union side and was to act as guide so that the head of the government would certainly be secured. In Butler's own words Jefferson Davis would take a ride to Fort Monroe to greet an old friend of his, who would take special care to keep him there, particularly if the telegraph wires were not working between there and Washington. Butler would see to it that they were not working. The third object on his list was the destruction of war plants, especially of the Tredegar Iron Works. After entry into the city had been accomplished, Butler was to join Wistar in person, and after they had done their work, so he wrote ominously, he doubted if anybody would desire to have the Rebel capital there any longer.

Others in Butler's place might have reversed the order of this plan. The Tredegar Iron Works was the heart of Southern military power. From its foundries and workshops flowed the bulk of the armaments which kept the Eastern armies going. Butler, however, was primarily a politician. The release of the prisoners would make untold votes for him, and the kidnaping of Jefferson Davis would make him a national hero. Thoughts of the Vice-Presidency were fading. Why should not the next President of the United States be a man from Massachusetts?

A signal officer with a telegram interrupted this pleasant day dream. General Meade was sick, and General John Sedgwick,

temporarily in command, was unwilling to make a demonstration against Lee. Butler flew into a rage, but controlled his temper sufficiently to send off polite messages, in which he repeated the urgency of quick action. It took a lot of persuasion to make Sedgwick change his mind, but in the end he promised to keep Lee on the *qui vive* and prevent the detaching of Confederate forces from the main army. Matters were shaping up satisfactorily after all. A small fly in the ointment was that Pickett had been repulsed at New Bern and might return to Richmond sooner than desired. That, however, was a risk which had to be taken. It was now too late to change the well-formed dispositions. Wistar had reported everything shipshape, adding, "I hope and verily believe that I have forgotten nothing." He concluded his message with a postscript: "On Sunday morning at 5 o'clock pray for our country and for me." Whether or not Butler prayed for Wistar and the country his memoirs do not disclose. If he did, the odds are that he did not fail to include Benjamin F. Butler in the invocation.

Saturday, February 6, came and everything augured well. Advances from General Sedgwick indicated that he had begun to execute the promised movement. At the time the dispatch was filed the firing along the Rapidan was still continuing. Butler replied that his own troops had gone into position and would strike the next morning at 5:00 o'clock. He was so sanguine that he advised Sedgwick to press Lee in earnest, a piece of impertinence from a civilian general which that West Pointer no doubt resented.

A sour note began to creep into the exchange of telegrams. "We have made an attack on our extreme right," Sedgwick reported. "We lost 200 in killed and wounded last evening at Morton's Ford." Butler ignored the implied reproach. On Sunday morning, the fateful day, he replied hopefully, "All has gone well with us, up to the time when movement went beyond line of telegraph. I have not heard since."

Butler would have been shocked had he known that on February 3, while he was busy laying his secret plans to deceive the enemy, General Lee had forwarded this dispatch in cipher to Richmond from his headquarters at Orange Court House.

The President:

Do you wish troops sent to Richmond?

Jefferson Davis' reply, carefully considered, was in the negative, which would have been a still greater shock to Butler had he known of it.

Shortly before 3:00 A.M. General Wistar's six thousand men arrived at Bottom's Bridge, some eleven miles from Richmond, according to plan. A picked company, on the best horses, was placed in advance to ride down the gray pickets. The wires between Meadow Station and Richmond had presumably been cut during the preceding night. The pickets at New Kent and Baltimore Crossroads would be taken care of. Special detachments had been carefully instructed how to carry out their respective tasks in Richmond, while the main body of troops was to hold Capitol Square. Nothing had been left to chance. If the Chickahominy could be crossed by way of Bottom's Bridge without precipitating a battle, success was assured. And who should give battle there? What could twenty men, even if reinforced by the two or three hundred in reserve, do against six thousand, especially if taken by surprise?

The crucial moment struck. A company of the New York Mounted Rifles, leading the advance, raced toward the bridge, riding at top speed on a causeway built between impassable marshes. The hoofbeats of the horses sounded hollow in the silence of the winter morning. A few more moments, and a happy message would be flashed to Butler. Then suddenly other sounds,

harsh and menacing, mingled with those of the hoofbeats. It was the thunder of hundreds of rifles, of guns shotted with canister, and of missiles being hurled across Bottom's Bridge into the oncoming Federals. Men tumbled from their saddles, wounded horses reared and threw their riders. On the narrow causeway everything was confusion as the whole company tried to escape the unheralded death trap. On their return those who had been in front reported that the bridge planks had been taken up and on the opposite side they had seen great masses of infantry, cavalry and artillery in solid formation, with more moving into line.

Wistar, although dumfounded and discomfited, did not give up easily. He issued orders to reconnoiter the river for several miles, both above and below the dismantled bridge. Wherever the stream could be forded, however, the enemy was found on guard, and newly placed obstructions showed that he was fully prepared to contest any crossing.

The wreck of Wistar's plan was complete. All that remained was the fruitless labor of trying to explain the mystery of this unexpected denouement.

When Butler received the bad news he was slow to believe it. The preparations had been made with such secrecy; even over the wires everyone had been careful to use words which would be meaningless to spying ears. When final confirmation of the repulse came from the front, he bellowed like an infuriated bull. Somewhere there had been a leak, and if he could lay his hands on the culprit—— But first he had to find him.

All of Butler's provost marshals and intelligence officers were instructed to discover what had caused the miscarriage of the project on which he had pinned his hopes. But the solution of the mystery proved easier than anyone had anticipated. On the

day following, the regular Flag of Truce boat arrived at Fort Monroe with copies of the *Richmond Examiner* and *Sentinel*. There, plainly displayed in their columns, was the story.

Some days since a report was obtained by the authorities here from a Yankee deserter that the enemy was contemplating a raid in considerable force on Richmond. The report obtained consistency from a number of circumstances, and impressed the authorities to such a degree that a disposition of forces was made to anticipate the supposed design of the enemy.

They certainly had made a disposition. At any rate, it had successfully disposed of Butler's great plan. More than ever he was determined to smoke out the traitor in his ranks. As a lawyer he had handled many criminal cases, and he was now in his old element. He asked General Wistar to check his records and see who had lately deserted from his command. Butler reasoned shrewdly that the traitor, whoever he was, would be a recent deserter from a front-line camp. No one else was likely to know the details of the proposed coup.

Wistar's reply showed that Butler's shot had hit the mark. This is what had happened.

Private William Boyle, New York Mounted Rifles, under sentence of death for murder of Lieutenant Disoway, was allowed to escape by Private Abrams of One Hundred and Thirty-ninth New York, the sentinel over him, four days previous to my movement. It is said he also told him that large numbers of cavalry and infantry were concentrated here at Fort Magruder, near the front, to take Richmond. During my absence the commander here has learned that Boyle reached Richmond, and was arrested and placed in Castle Thunder. Boyle would have hung long ago but for the President's order suspending till further orders the execution of capital sentences. Abrams is in close custody. Charges against him went forward a week ago.

Here then was the explanation of the disaster, although it offered little in the way of consolation. A murderer in a soldier's uniform had traded his liberation from imprisonment against the secret of the proposed attack. What made Butler especially furious was that he had only two unimportant private soldiers on whom to wreak revenge. One of them was in his power; perhaps he could also lay his hands on the other. Much as he hated to ask a favor from the despised Rebels, he hated frustration more. Quickly he wrote a suave letter to Robert Ould, the Confederate commissioner who handled the exchange of war prisoners.

February 16, 1864

Sir:

Private *Wm. J. Boyle*, 1st. Regt. N.Y.D. Rifles, was tried and convicted for murder of the Acting Provost Marshal in October last. For humane motives the sentence was not executed. He made his escape by colluding with a sentinel about the 5th inst., and as we learn by the papers, has reached Richmond. As this man is a murderer duly convicted, it is believed the Confederate Authorities will not desire to retain him, as a murderer is defined to be an enemy of all mankind.

I am willing to offer to give you any private soldier we hold of yours in exchange for *Boyle*. . . .

The records make it appear that Butler received no reply to his entreaty. Rumor had it that the Confederate authorities, unmoved by an appeal to humane principles from one they called the "Beast," had allowed Boyle to escape, and even facilitated his return to New York, where he had promised to vote the anti-Lincoln ticket.

Still, there was Abrams, the New York soldier who had let Boyle escape, and Butler would have dearly loved to make him suffer. Abrams had already been sentenced to death by a court-martial, but the Presidential decree of clemency prevented his

execution. Perhaps Joseph Holt, the tight-lipped Judge Advocate General, who was said to have a heart of stone, could be made to see the matter in the same light as Butler. On the following day a fervent plea was on its way to Washington.

Col. Joseph Holt, Judge Advocate General, Washington.

Colonel: I send the case of Private *Abrams*, who is convicted upon satisfactory evidence of having suffered *Boyle*, the murderer, to escape. Knowing him to be a murderer, and knowing that an expedition was about to start for *Richmond*, and that it was Boyle's intention to go within the enemy's lines, where he gave the information that defeated our plans, may I ask the promptest revisal of the case, and that the *President's* attention may be called to it so that a prompt example may be made. A higher military crime cannot be conceived. I should have had him shot within twenty-four hours had it been within my power. . . .

Much aggravation was in store for the Federal commanders involved in the affair. General Sedgwick, who had made a demonstration against Lee on February 6 contrary to his better judgment, had sent a plaintive wire to General in Chief Halleck. One result of the co-operation with General Butler, he claimed, was that it had spoiled the best chance for a successful attack against Lee on the Rapidan. This telegram aroused Halleck's ire. Was he going to be blamed for everything? First he had acceded to Butler's expedition, which had proved a dud; then he had enlisted Sedgwick's support, and now he was asked to carry the burden of that general's past and future failures. Angrily, he asked Sedgwick to elucidate. But what he received in reply was not to his liking. Sedgwick had made a feint at Morton's Ford, and now pointed out that this was the only point at which Lee was vulnerable. It had been lightly held, and at some future time, with the whole Army of the Potomac to follow the attack, the entire enemy position on

the Rapidan might have been turned there. Henceforth Morton's Ford would be strongly entrenched, of course. An attack at some other and well-fortified place would have marked the affair plainly as a mere demonstration and might have aroused Lee's suspicions, thereby defeating its purpose, if not worse.

There is good reason to believe that Butler, good lawyer that he was, knew that he would not be allowed to hang Private Abrams. An exception might have been granted to a political favorite, but not to him. He was not unaware of his unpopularity in high military and administrative circles. But if he had to lose, he would go down fighting. The day after Wistar had been beaten back, and the cause of the setback had been ascertained, Butler sent a dispatch to Lincoln, couched in extraordinary language. Rarely, if ever, has a general in the field addressed such uncouth remarks to the highest official of his government. After alluding to his defeat, to Boyle's treachery and to General Wistar's report on Private Abrams, he added these sentences:

I sent it [Wistar's message] to you that you may see how your clemency has been misplaced. I desire that you will revoke your order suspending executions in this department. Please answer by telegraph.

These words must be read twice to appraise the full extent of their insolence. "I desire that you will revoke your order. . . . Please answer by telegraph." This sounded like a command to a subaltern, not like a plea to the Chief Executive. Lincoln did not deign to reply to the telegram, nor did he deviate from the rules for clemency which he had laid down. But, right or wrong, the facts seem to bear out Butler's claim that, if the death penalty had stilled William Boyle's voice before he could have turned traitor, the Confederate capital might have fared badly in the late winter

of 1863-1864. Had Butler's raid been successful, had Tredegar been damaged and Jefferson Davis abducted, the war would undoubtedly have been shortened by months; but whether even that goal was worth the possibility of elevating Benjamin F. Butler to the Presidency of the United States is another question, and one to which every student of history must supply his own answer.

1854-1862

In which romance triumphs over naval engineering

IF AN emperor of France had not been madly in love with his young wife and with the pleasures of court life, the famous sea duel between the *Monitor* and the *Merrimac* would not have been fought.

Louis Napoleon, Emperor of France, was in ill humor. His ministers constantly interfered with his amusements by worrying him with affairs of state. Of late they had been particularly bothersome, harping on a subject obnoxious to him. His Majesty, they said, would have to get married; His Majesty was expected to create a dynasty; His Majesty—begging his pardon—was getting along in years, and there was not much time to be lost. These ministers were exasperatingly polite, but they also were exasperatingly firm.

Napoleon thought he had good reason to be annoyed. His advisers knew that the early life of their ruler had not been a happy one. He had been brought up with the idea that the throne of France was his by right of birth; but others held a different opinion, and he had been forced to spend most of his life in exile. He had resided in Italy, Austria, England and Germany, and spoke French with a German accent, a reminder of his student years at the Gymnasium at Augsburg. Six years of his life had been spent in prison. It had been a long and hard road he traveled before he was elected President of the French Republic in 1848, and he had to wait four years longer before, at the age of forty-four, he

had been crowned Napoleon III, Emperor of France. Now that he had attained the goal of his ambition, he intended to enjoy himself. There was much pleasure to be crowded into an ever-shortening space of time. His ministers should have realized this.

Wearied by their incessant nagging, however, the Emperor finally consented to get married, provided a suitable wife could be found for him. After all, he was getting tired of mistresses; there had been so many of them, from the pretty country girl Alexandrine, who had visited him in prison and borne him two children, to the English-born Elizabeth Howard, who was the latest to share his bed and confidence.

After a long and wide search the choice of Napoleon's entourage fell on the twenty-six year old daughter of a Spanish nobleman who had fought in the defense of Paris. Her name was Eugénie de Montijo, Comtesse de Teba. The Emperor was introduced to her and succumbed. He proclaimed exultingly that for the first time real love had entered his heart. On January 29, 1853, the marriage ceremony was performed. Empress Eugénie, dignified, beautiful, charming, soon had the French Court worshipping at her feet. Louis Napoleon was happier than he had ever been in his life.

In honor of the young Empress a round of pleasures was inaugurated which in exotic splendor even outdid the orgies of the pre-Revolutionary monarchs. Life at the Imperial Court became one grand revelry. When the stately dances of the day palled on the courtiers, costume balls took their place. Gradually much of the decorum was dropped, and the Court attendants were delighted when the Empress herself appeared in the guise of scantily clad Diana the Huntress. The ladies in waiting interpreted it as an invitation to display their own shapely figures and joyfully took advantage of the opportunity.

But in the course of time costume balls, too, became stale, and

spiritualistic sittings became the fashion. In between the dances and séances hunting parties were arranged, during which the audience watched a stag being pulled down by hounds. When this amusement had outlived its fascination, it was replaced by bull-fights, and when all the old games gave out new ones were invented. At one time the courtesans placed themselves on top of a hill, while the Emperor, at the head of a small army of soft-skinned and powdered men, crawled up the incline on all fours, to force their laughing and screaming opponents into a graceful and not-too-reluctant surrender. The French people enjoyed reading about these risqué Court affairs and tried to emulate them. Louis Napoleon enjoyed himself hugely. It seemed that his honeymoon would never end.

Then, out of the blue came an irritating interruption. News reached Paris that the Tsar of Russia had turned on the Sultan of Turkey for alleged crimes committed against the Orthodox church in Turkish-occupied Greece. The pretext, of course, was transparent. Russia wanted to pick a quarrel with the Sultan, the sick man of Europe, because the Tsar thought the time ripe for gratifying his country's century-old desire to gain an outlet to the Mediterranean Sea through the Dardanelles.

Turkey called for help and, surprisingly, did not call in vain. Both England and France came to her aid, England to contain Russia, her traditional enemy, France because Louis saw a chance for easy victories with an attending increase in his prestige and popularity. Anyway, he did not like the Tsar, who once had snubbed him by treating him as a usurper. The combined British and French fleets were ordered to the Black Sea, and in March 1854 the two Western powers declared war on Russia.

Six months passed and disappointment took the place of early hopes. The Crimean War was not progressing as rapidly as the allies had expected. This was distasteful, for a quick and success-

ful conclusion was important to Louis Napoleon. Not that he had any love for either Turkey or Great Britain nor, for that matter, a violent hatred against Russia, but prolonged hostilities were apt to upset his plans. His main incentive had been to fortify his position, to attain as much glory as could be bought for the lowest possible price. The drain on the national treasury, which threatened to assume large proportions, would have to be kept within bounds. The details of the campaign did not interest him. He had his beautiful wife and his Court to entertain him, and both kept him busy. When the Swedish minister in Paris handed him a letter one day in October he was so engrossed in his pleasures that he paid scant attention to it. Of course, out of consideration for the representative of a friendly power he restrained his impatience. He thanked the minister and, after uttering a few polite phrases, let him depart. He then handed the letter to one of his secretaries with instructions to dispose of it. The Emperor himself had an appointment with his wife, which promised a more satisfying diversion.

The letter, it appeared, had been written by a noted Swedish engineer named John Ericsson, who was then living in the United States. Its contents were nothing short of sensational, and no letter Louis Napoleon had ever received was more important. Ericsson had submitted to the Emperor detailed drawings of a new war vessel, together with a minute description, and had accompanied both with a small model. Its construction was most peculiar. The steel-protected engines were placed below the water line, to insure their protection from enemy gunfire. The deck was almost even with the water line, and on it was placed a revolving turret equipped with two heavy guns. The whole contraption looked like nothing any other naval engineer had ever designed. In fact, it did not look like a warship at all. The Swedish-American inventor made no demands for himself except that he wanted the ship called the

Monitor. His sole purpose in handing the plan to the French Emperor, he emphasized, was to help cause the destruction of the Russian fleet. Russia had long been the hereditary enemy of his native Sweden and, when he was a boy, the Russo-Swedish war of 1811 had ruined his father financially. Ericsson had never forgotten it.

History does not record whether the Emperor's secretary fully understood the potentialities of Ericsson's invention, but he seems to have been considerably impressed, perhaps by the unusual way in which both had been delivered. At any rate there is reason to believe that he brought the matter to Louis' personal attention, judging from a letter which Ericsson received in due course of time. It had been written on perfumed stationery, and its language was studiously polite.

Monsieur:

The Emperor himself has examined with the greatest care the new system of naval attack which you have submitted to him. His Majesty directs me to have the honor of informing you that he has found your ideas very ingenious and worthy of the celebrated name of their author; but the Emperor thinks that the result to be obtained would not be proportionate to the expenses or to the small number of guns which could be brought into use. Although not disposed to make use of your inventions, the Emperor appreciates all their merit and directs me to thank you for this interesting communication.

Ericsson had not offered the *Monitor* to France before offering it first to his adopted country, but he had lost hope that the Washington authorities would accept it. They had at no time seemed kindly disposed toward him, although his name was already well-known in engineering circles, and he had a long line of inventions to his credit—new types of steam boilers, a new fire engine, a novel process for making salt from brine. In 1829 he had designed

and constructed a steam engine which he called the "Novelty," and entered it in a contest against Stephenson's "Rocket." He lost the contest, but came off with an enhanced reputation. His "Novelty," it was generally conceded, was in several respects superior to the prize winner. Again in 1840 he had walked away with high honors in a contest sponsored by the Mechanic's Institute of New York for the best design of a steam fire engine. If the American Navy Department looked at him somewhat askance, it was mainly on account of an unfortunate accident in which he had been involved, but for which he had been in no way responsible.

In 1844, America had placed its first screw-propelled warship in commission, the U.S.S. *Princeton*. The principal armament of the thousand-ton frigate consisted of two large wrought-iron guns, and their construction was as radically new as her mode of locomotion. One of the guns had been built by the naval veteran, Captain Robert F. Stockton, and had been named the "Peacemaker"; the other had been brought from England by John Ericsson, who had called his gun the "Oregon."

On February 28, 1844, the *Princeton* was taken for a trial run down the Potomac. Among her passengers were President John Tyler and Miss Julia Gardiner, who was soon to become his wife; members of the Cabinet and their wives had also been invited. The new battleship responded smoothly to the screw propellers, and the two guns performed equally well when they were fired to show their prowess. Later the company repaired below decks for a sumptuous repast. After many toasts had been drunk, Miss Gardiner, perhaps impelled by courtesy, asked Captain Stockton to fire his gun once more. Acceding to her request, he went on deck to supervise the operation, and many of the guests went with him to witness the spectacle from near by.

The fuse was lighted, and the "Peacemaker" roared. The next

moment there were cries of anguish as flames shot out and missiles flew about, killing and maiming those within reach. The "Peacemaker" had burst. Among the dead were Secretary of State Abel P. Upshur and Secretary of the Navy Thomas W. Gilmer. Five more persons lost their lives, and many, badly injured, had to be taken to hospitals.

The tragic ending of the Presidential party had in no way been due to Ericsson's "Oregon," which had stood the tests well; but an excited and indignant public soon became confused, and even official Washington unjustly made him bear part of the blame for the accident. For many years it ruined his chances to receive an impartial hearing for his inventions. The men at the United States Navy Department curtly rejected all of them. He never was allowed to forget his ill-fated connection with "Stockton's Folly."

The Navy Department probably was perturbed about something else in Ericsson's record. From his earliest days as an engineer he had nursed the idea that the heat of a flame could be made to produce power more cheaply than the insertion of steam as an intermediary. A direct application of heat, the inventor believed, should be far more effective and economical. After many trials, Ericsson finally constructed a number of his "caloric engines," as he called them, and a boat was outfitted with them. The experiment, however, was not a success and was not repeated. Then Ericsson turned his talents to the construction of a new war vessel. Its outstanding features were a revolving gun turret and reduced vulnerability to enemy fire. He submitted his idea to the American Navy, but again met with contemptuous indifference. His invention, it was hinted, was a wild dream and not worthy of consideration.

Ericsson was a proud and strong-willed man, a lone wolf without social graces, and not one to suffer scornful treatment without a heated protest.

"Am I not the originator and founder and perfecter of war steamers," he wrote, "of under-water machinery and the entire system? Did any of my screw-engines ever fail? I say damned is the injustice of calling him 'wild' who has originated with his wildness and perfected war propulsion."

This protest did Ericsson more harm than good. The Navy Department continued to slight him. It was at this time that the Crimean War broke out, and presented an opportunity to test the latest creation of Ericsson's genius. If the United States did not want the *Monitor*, he would offer it to Louis Napoleon. If America spurned him, he felt sure France would not. But when he received Napoleon's refusal, he concluded that the minds of the French officials were no more farsighted than those of the brass hats at home. It looked as if the *Monitor* would never be built.

Then came 1861 and the Civil War. On August 3, 1861, Congress authorized the appointment of a Federal board to select the three best designs for new warships. It was universally admitted that the United States had lagged behind in naval construction, and that the navy should be brought up to date. France and England had already interspersed their wooden fleets with a few experimental armor-clads, while America so far had ignored this innovation. On August 8, the members of the board were appointed, and on the twenty-ninth of the same month Ericsson sent a memorandum to President Lincoln, renewing his offer of the *Monitor*, clothing it in what he considered timely and attractive terms. The vessel was to serve for "the destruction of the Rebel fleet at Norfolk and for scouring the Southern rivers and inlets of all craft protected by Rebel batteries." What Ericsson had in view was to invade the harbor of Norfolk, where it was said the Confederates were raising the warships which an over-aged and panic-stricken commander had ordered sunk, after he had failed either to move or safeguard them before Virginia seceded. It was also

rumored that the Southerners were converting one of the boats, the *Merrimac*, into a secret naval weapon. Its destruction by Ericsson's *Monitor*, before it was finished, would constitute a major triumph for the North.

There was no direct response to Ericsson's offer from the White House, but eventually the *Monitor* was one of the models selected. The board still called it a floating battery, in line with a device which lately had caught the public fancy. Apparently the engineers who approved Ericsson's invention either did not appreciate its salient points or else were careful not to publicize them.

The rest is a story which has been told many times—how a gun-studded monster with heavily plated sides, flying the Confederate flag, crept out one March morning into Hampton Roads, how it destroyed the United States warships *Cumberland* and *Congress*, how it sent a wave of terror throughout the North. One more day, it was feared, and the South would break the blockade and either annihilate the rest of the United States fleet or scatter it out of harm's way. But that day never came. Overnight Ericsson's little *Monitor* made its appearance and held the *Merrimac* at bay. And, strangely, while people called the *Monitor* a cheesebox on a raft, no one ever called her "Ericsson's Folly."

When a pleasure-loving Emperor in his palace at Paris read the story of the duel in Hampton Roads, he must have wondered what would have been the consequences if he had taken up Ericsson's offer. "The results to be obtained would not be proportionate to the expenses," his letter had said. In retrospect these words looked absurd. At the cost of one little vessel France, and not Britain, would have ruled the waves during some critical years.

In the Navy Department at Washington some men also wondered. What would have happened if they had not been so blind and prejudiced in former years? A trial order then given to Ericsson,

and soon all the navies of the world would have had *Monitors* or similar war vessels in large numbers. True, these little boats were still useless out in the open sea, but would be invaluable for the defense of harbors. They were mighty effective against wooden battleships and, as the battle in Hampton Roads had demonstrated, could offer formidable opposition even to armored vessels. With America's ports protected by a fleet of *Monitors*, her diplomats abroad would have found their task much easier and could have laughed at many implied threats of her European confreres.

The only one who was little concerned with the *Its* of the *Monitor* was John Ericsson. One *Monitor* or dozens of them—it could make no difference to him. Ericsson's name was forever engraved in the Hall of Fame, and there are no varying degrees of immortality.

1861-1865

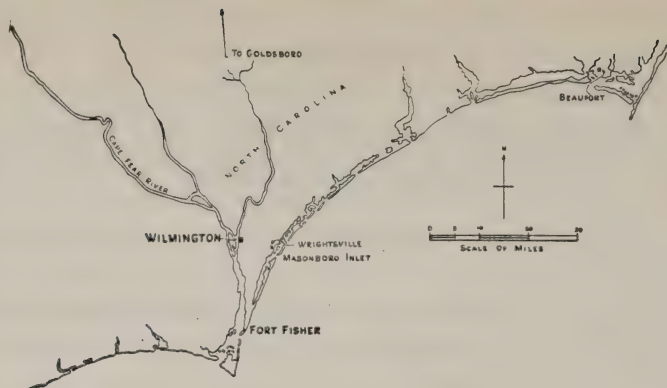
*In which peanuts, poetry, sickness and a siege are
strangely intermingled*

IF THE captain of a blockade runner had not become ill in the summer of 1863, disintegration of the Confederacy might have begun in the fall of that year.

In July 1863 a retired New York merchant received a present in the form of a bag filled with peanuts. It had been sent to him by his brother in Wilmington, North Carolina. When the contents of the bag had been partially consumed, a few pieces of tissue paper turned up near the bottom. Upon examination they were found to contain valuable military information. The papers were immediately handed over to the proper authorities and gave cause to a development which might have hastened the end of the war.

The story of the peanuts and of their effect on the Civil War dates back a good many years.

In 1822, there was born in the State of Massachusetts a boy named James R. Gilmore. From his earliest childhood it became clear that he had been gifted with unusual talents, the more remarkable as they covered a great variety of fields. He wrote poetry with ease and good taste, he had a faculty of making himself liked by people in all walks of life, and his acumen in business matters was far keener than one would have expected in a boy of his years. At the age of twenty-five James Gilmore was a wealthy man. When asked from which college he had been graduated, he used to answer laughingly that it was a Boston mercantile estab-



FORT FISHER AND WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA

lishment and that his favorite professor had been a businessman called Frederic Kidder. Eventually the older man had taken Gilmore into partnership, and the firm of J. R. Gilmore and Company had dealt in Southern commodities, principally cotton. One of Kidder's brothers, Edward, had permanently settled in Wilmington, North Carolina, where he had lived since 1826, and was considered one of its leading citizens. The brothers had remained on intimate terms with each other and kept up a regular and friendly correspondence.

The two partners had taken advantage of their Wilmington connection, and in the course of time and by extensive travels Gilmore also became well acquainted with the South and its customs. The business was so profitable that in 1857 both partners retired with a substantial competency. For a while Gilmore enjoyed life, and Kidder, who was the older by eighteen years, devoted his time and money to charity, churches and the cause of abolition. His sympathy for the Negro race was sincerely shared by Gilmore, but the contributions of the younger man to the emancipation movement were mostly of a literary nature.

Both men saw the conflict between North and South coming closer year by year and were not unprepared for it when the storm broke. Gilmore wrote war songs, some of which proved successful. Not satisfied with the impression they made, however, he founded a magazine, the *Continental Monthly*, for which he engaged a skillful journalist named Charles G. Leland as editor. It preached the doctrine of emancipation for the sake of both the white and the colored races. The publication, in the columns of which Gilmore's former partner also expressed his views with considerable persuasiveness, rapidly rose in circulation and influence, although it never reached a paying basis. In 1863, after Lincoln had issued his emancipation proclamation, the venture was abandoned. The goal for which it had striven had been attained, and Gilmore turned his attention to other matters.

While engaged in his literary enterprise he had made many important political contacts. He had gained the friendship of New York's leading editor, Horace Greeley, and finally became a contributor to the *New York Tribune*, and one of its most prominent roving reporters. Several times he had been received by Lincoln and had acted as go-between for him on secret and confidential missions.

Meantime Kidder also had been active. From the early days of the war he had advocated a plan which he believed would break the resistance of the South. What he suggested was that the North follow part of the same strategy on which the British had based their master plan to put down the American Revolution. It had aimed at separating the Southern from the Middle Colonies by a barrier running west from Charleston. Kidder was convinced that this had been sound strategy and could be applied to the Confederacy with a good prospect of ending the Civil War in short order.

The question was to find the weakest spot in the South in which to insert the wedge, and Kidder thought he had the answer to it.

The answer was North Carolina. Although mail service between the two warring sections had stopped, he had been conducting a clandestine correspondence with his brother Edward at Wilmington through a blockade runner, who plied his trade between the North Carolina port and the British-owned Bahamas, from where mail could be forwarded to the United States through regular channels.

Conditions in North Carolina, so the almost native Edward believed, were propitious for secession from Secession. The governor of North Carolina, Zebulon B. Vance, was a young politician who enjoyed great popularity in his home state, but who found himself constantly at loggerheads with the Richmond administration. At the beginning of the war he had enlisted as a captain, quickly rose to the rank of colonel and did good service in the battle of New Bern, where by clever tactics he saved his regiment after it had been given up as lost. At Malvern Hill he fought with distinction, and received authority from his state to form a brigade. No less than four companies tendered him their services, for he had gained a favorable reputation as commander. The brigade was formed, and Vance's adjutant applied to the Confederate War Department for tents and other necessary camp equipment. The request was granted, as it should have been, but the order was immediately and mysteriously rescinded, putting Vance in an embarrassing position.

From then on slights fell on the young governor in rapid succession. Twenty-one brigadier generals were appointed by Jefferson Davis, but Vance was not one of them, despite his fine war record. At the time he took part in the fighting at Malvern Hill, he had already been elected governor and could have resigned from service honorably; but he refused to let others do the fighting while he was waiting for the incumbent to move out. Vance firmly believed that the President of the Confederacy was opposed to him on poli-

tical grounds, Mr. Davis being a Democrat and Vance an old-time Whig. For this difference the governor was willing to make proper allowances; but he objected to having a mere diversity of opinion degenerate into persecution. In August 1862 the two men met at Richmond for a private conference to settle their difficulties, but during the five days of Vance's visit he felt himself so badly treated by Mr. Davis that he returned home in a worse state of mind than before.

The slights soon grew to insults, at least from Vance's point of view. He claimed that Davis deliberately appointed tax collectors from other states, thereby causing so much dissatisfaction that peace meetings were being held in some sections of North Carolina as early as 1862. The mountaineer folk of the state, he remonstrated, were staunch conservatives and had to be treated with more consideration than they were receiving.

In October 1862 Vance wrote to President Davis that both he and Secretary of War George W. Randolph had agreed in a verbal conference to give conscripts for the army the privilege to select the regiment in which they wished to enroll. When he reached home, he found that this promise was not being kept, and when he wrote letters of protest, they remained unanswered. It was then that Vance sounded a note of warning to Mr. Davis.

The late election, after sixteen months of war and membership with the Confederacy, shows conclusively that the original advocates of secession no longer hold the ear of our people. . . . *These are facts* . . . The opinion of the old Union leaders must be heeded . . . or the worst consequences may ensue. . . .

Matters did not change. On January 26, 1863, Vance addressed himself to Secretary of War James A. Seddon, who had succeeded Randolph in office.

Having submitted in silence to the many, very many acts of the Administration, heretofore, so calculated to wound that pride which North Carolina is so pardonable for entertaining, it is my duty to inform you that if persisted in, it will cause a feeling throughout . . . which it is my great desire to avoid. . . .

In this crescendo of internal strife Vance himself was not free from blame, for his hyper-sensitiveness and tortured interpretation of some laws caused the central government and General Lee no end of trouble. The mutual irritation between the President and the governor, fed by various incidents, continued to find expression in an exchange of acrimonious letters and telegrams.

The Confederate laws exempted essential state employees from military service, whereupon Vance construed these statutes to include all employees of state institutions, and was accused of appointing thousands of his partisans to desk positions where they were safe from recruiting officers. The Confederate War Department arrested them, regardless of Vance's protests, whereupon the latter struck back by issuing, on May 26, 1863, his General Order No. 9.

Military officers are ordered not to arrest any man as a conscript or deserter who has been discharged by a writ of habeas corpus tried before any judge of the Superior or Supreme Court of the State. They are further ordered to resist any such arrest upon the part of any person not authorized by the legal process of a court having jurisdiction.

This order, so plainly pointed at the Confederate authorities, came close to open insurrection. To make matters worse, another flare-up caused more trouble. A ship, the *Advance*, had been purchased by the State of North Carolina and was used as a blockade runner. One day, having made port safely with a consignment of soldiers'

clothing, she was lying in the harbor of Wilmington, ready to discharge her cargo. Vance was desirous to visit the boat and, in order to avoid friction, obtained a permit from the military authorities to go on board, although the ship was the property of his state. When he had finished the inspection and was ready to step on the landing plank, he was stopped by an officer who refused to let him leave the boat, the governor's official permit notwithstanding. In the end Vance was allowed to depart, but on July 6, 1863, he wrote a stinging letter to President Davis, stating that "deliberately, willfully and without excuse, a gross insult" had been "inflicted on the people of North Carolina."

This almost amounted to an unofficial declaration of war. By September 10 the feeling had grown so bitter that Vance began to threaten Jefferson Davis openly. The provocation which caused the complaint, it must be admitted, was unusually strong.

President Davis:

A Georgia regiment . . . entered this city [Raleigh] last night at 10 o'clock and destroyed the office of the "Standard." . . . This morning a mob of citizens destroyed the office of the "State Journal" in retaliation. Please order immediately that troops passing through here shall not enter the city. If this is not done, the most frightful consequences may ensue.

The next day Vance followed up this dispatch with another:

The country is in a dangerous excitement, and it will require the utmost skill and tact to guide it through safely and honorably.

Thus relations between Jefferson Davis and Vance steadily deteriorated, until they approached an open break. The exchange of letters between them was carried on in venomous language, and

Vance included the Secretary of War in his all-embracing hatred for the Richmond administration.

Stories of Vance's disaffection had reached the North by the middle of 1863, and it was small wonder that Frederic Kidder, waiting watchfully at New York, thought the time ripe to attempt the separation of North Carolina from her sister states. What was the real situation, he asked his brother Edward in Wilmington, and what measures on the part of the Federal Government would offer the best promise of helping North Carolina to separate itself from the Confederacy? The interchange of letters between the two brothers now was becoming dangerous for Edward, for the authorities were certain to consider his conduct treasonable. The correspondence could not have been carried on at all had it not been for a trustworthy captain who smuggled the letters through by concealing them on his person. This captain had sailed Edward Kidder's ships for many years, was now in the Confederate blockade-running service, but felt greater loyalty to his former employer than to his government.

There was, however, a limit even to the loyalty he thought he owed to Mr. Kidder. To carry a message dealing with subversive activities was playing with death, and the captain refused to take the risk. His papers were subject to inspection by Southern agents at any time and, if a letter of this kind were found among his belongings, he would lose his livelihood and his liberty, while his employer would be sent to the gallows without much ado. Nevertheless, the captain was willing to smuggle an ordinary letter through, one of a personal nature, and assure its delivery by keeping it from the spying eyes of the mail clerks.

So it came about that early in July 1863 the Northern brother received a harmless missive, entirely devoted to family news. Cousin Mary was suffering from migraine; and how was Uncle

John's rheumatism? A postscript admonished the recipient to examine closely a present which was being forwarded.

The present arrived, and proved to be a bag of fine-looking peanuts. Among the papers hidden near its bottom were discovered a map of Wilmington, and a portentous message. The map showed the fortifications around Wilmington; the message said that in Edward's judgment immediate action was inadvisable. He had sounded out the governor, who had not yet given up his effort to convert the Richmond government to the view that general peace negotiations were in order. Should Vance be unsuccessful, however, he was ready to go his own way. He would endeavor to take his state out of the Confederacy and conclude a separate peace.

Vance attached some conditions to his offer of surrender. North Carolina would have to be readmitted into the Union with all her rights unimpaired. Moreover, the owners of slaves should receive appropriate compensation. Edward Kidder stressed in his letter that the governor was anxious to know if these terms were acceptable, and wanted Lincoln's personal assurance to that effect before he committed himself overtly.

This looked like a reasonable basis on which to begin negotiations, and Gilmore, who had easy access to the White House, was entrusted with the mission of calling on the President. Lincoln, always anxious to grasp at anything that promised cessation of the war, was inclined to encourage Vance's peace feeler, but in his cagey way he was careful not to enter officially into a deal which eventually might peter out. After mulling the matter over, he allowed Gilmore to address a letter to the governor of North Carolina on White House stationery. Gilmore wrote:

My former business partner has forwarded to me a letter
... from his brother, Edward Kidder of Wilmington ...

[saying that] you expressed an anxiety for any peace compatible with honor . . . and that you should exert all your influence to bring about any reunion that would admit the South on terms of perfect equality with the North.

. . . The President of the United States . . . expressed great gratification . . . and he authorizes me to say . . . that he will be glad to receive overtures . . . [and that] he will communicate to you through me. . . .

. . . Please forward to me . . . your official permit . . . to enter and leave the State. . . .

Lincoln read the communication slowly, and then added a few weighty words.

This letter has been written in my presence, has been read by me, and has my entire approval.

(Signed) A.L.

Kidder waited impatiently for an answer. None came. July, August and September of 1863 rolled by, and still there was no word from his brother. What could have happened to him? If his letter had been intercepted, he would now be dead or behind bars. If Frederic went to his succor, he would probably accomplish nothing and would needlessly endanger his own life. He could expect no help from Lincoln. Yet, so far as the project was concerned, it stood no chance of success without Edward as an ally in Wilmington.

At last, in October, the long-expected letter arrived. The sea captain who had carried the mail between the two brothers and who was the only person whom Edward would trust had taken sick, and had been bedridden for two months. This untoward happening had interrupted the correspondence. Meanwhile there had been few new developments. The disaffection in North Carolina had spread still farther, and Vance was more and more con-

vinced that he would have to act alone. Jefferson Davis would not even discuss terms which failed to assure full independence for the Southern States.

Edward Kidder was in Vance's full confidence and conveyed to his brother a suggestion the governor had made in the course of their talks. Peace overtures, if and when he chose to make them, had best be furthered by military pressure from the outside. To Edward it seemed that an attack on Wilmington was the best move. The port was North Carolina's most vulnerable spot and the nerve center of the blockading trade. Its capture would be more calamitous for the South than a crushing defeat on land. Armies and equipment could be replaced, but there was only one Wilmington. None of the other ports was so favorably situated. Of course, the Washington authorities knew this, but they also knew that to capture Wilmington was easier said than done. The approaches to the city were bristling with fortifications. The mouth of the Cape Fear River, thirty miles downstream from Wilmington, was protected by Fort Fisher, a well-built, well-armed work and, in between, batteries commanded all river traffic. A direct attack by the fleet would have been foolhardy; but Edward Kidder had worked out a plan by which Wilmington might be taken in spite of these obstacles. This plan has been preserved in his own words, for he wrote it out later, modestly and without reference to himself, although he might well and with full justice have told it in the first person.

Wilmington is thirty miles from the sea, by the Cape Fear River, but only about twelve miles from a navigable sound east of it, [connected with] the ocean, [by] Masonboro Inlet, with seven feet of water at high tide. It was proposed to have a fleet of flat steamers rendezvous at Beaufort, fifty or sixty miles up the coast, on which to put 12,000 armed men, under an energetic commander. These were to be suddenly landed

on the main, at Masonboro Inlet, and marched directly to Wilmington. It was known that there were no defenses beyond two miles from the heart of Wilmington (and they were not very strong) to oppose the force coming in from the sea. It was proposed to have a strong cavalry force move simultaneously from New Bern[e], to tear up the railway between Wilmington and Goldsboro, and, if possible, to down and destroy the bridge within ten miles of Wilmington.

Once Wilmington was taken, Governor Vance would find it much easier to persuade the state legislature to conclude a separate peace, as he then could add the plea of military necessity to those arguments he had advanced to Jefferson Davis. That Vance was in earnest seemed assured. Twice he had visited Kidder in Wilmington and had bared his thoughts on the subject.

The information Kidder thus imparted to his brother was of the greatest importance, and the latter lost no time in forwarding it to the White House. Lincoln read the letter carefully and approved the plan, although he thought that ten to twelve thousand troops would not suffice for the expedition, and that the number should be raised to twenty thousand. But that many men were not immediately available. He further thought that General Ambrose Burnside was best fitted for the command. Burnside's successful operations at Roanoke Island in the early months of the war, he decided, entitled him to the appointment. It so happened, however, that Burnside at the moment was in eastern Tennessee, from where it was neither feasible nor desirable to withdraw him at once. Lincoln had entertained great sympathy for the eastern part of that state, because it had remained loyal to the Union, and he felt that its people should be protected. From a military point of view it would have been better to leave eastern Tennessee to its fate, at least temporarily, but in 1863 political considerations still outweighed grand strategy, and Burnside had been sent to Knox-

ville, where he found it difficult to maintain himself and where in a short while he was effectively bottled up. It was lucky for the North that the strategy of its opponents was no better than its own. General Braxton Bragg, in command before Chattanooga, detached his ablest corps commander, James Longstreet, to attack Burnside, thereby weakening his front and giving Grant the opportunity for a devastating stroke. But until these operations had been successfully concluded, the recall of Burnside to head the Wilmington venture would have to wait.

In conformity with the plan which had been worked out, Burnside had been relieved of his command on November 16, 1863, but three days later Longstreet appeared before Knoxville and besieged the fortified town. On November 29, after prolonged and justified hesitation, he finally made an assault, but was disastrously repulsed. In the meantime, Grant had beaten Bragg, and when on December 4 Sherman approached Knoxville with relief troops, Longstreet left discreetly. Burnside now was able to turn over the command to his successor, and went East to prepare for the Wilmington campaign. Recruiting was begun at once and under promising auspices.

In January 1864 the plan to take Wilmington was nearing fruition. Burnside was summoned to Washington, where he had long conferences with Mr. Kidder in the presence of Secretary of War Stanton. He was given the maps which had been smuggled through and received full instructions regarding his campaign. Frederic Kidder himself was to accompany him, so as to be ready to furnish detailed geographical and topographical information whenever required.

Everything pointed toward success. On December 21, 1863, Vance, after vain attempts to get satisfaction from President Davis by argumentation, had thrown away all restraint. Accusing the Richmond administration of failure to stop the constantly re-

cunning depredations and illegal seizures of property by bands of soldiers, he sent this telegram to Secretary of War Seddon:

[This] is enough . . . to breed a rebellion . . . against the Confederacy, and has already been the cause of much alienation of feeling in many parts of North Carolina. . . . It has become a grievance, intolerable, damnable, and not to be borne! . . .

And this, a month later, to Jefferson Davis:

After careful consideration of all the sources of discontent in North Carolina, I have concluded that it will be perhaps impossible to recover it except by making some effort at negotiation with the enemy. . . .

It was on January 23 that Vance wrote this dispatch urging peace negotiations. Jefferson Davis' reply was couched in a tone which infuriated the governor. Edward Kidder felt certain that if a moderate compensation for the slaves were offered—which Lincoln was willing to do—the legislature would follow the governor's lead and sue for peace. Immediate action was advisable for, due to the interrupted correspondence between the two brothers, much valuable time had been dissipated. But much as Burnside agreed with this view, a few thousand more men were still needed to bring the Ninth Army Corps to the desired strength. From then on the course appeared fairly free from obstacles.

A few more weeks passed. Recruiting had at last been completed. In the meantime, however, the general aspect of the war picture had changed. Preparations were being made for spring campaigns in all theaters of war. The appointment of General Grant as commander in chief of all Northern armies had been decided on, and

he was to act without White House interference. Hence, Grant's consent to Burnside's expedition was necessary to set it in motion. Lincoln took it upon himself to acquaint the newly appointed lieutenant general with what was being contemplated and found his listener in full agreement with the North Carolina campaign. Once more the road seemed clear.

Lincoln notified Gilmore to get ready for the trip and instructed him again with great care regarding the negotiations he was to initiate. Gilmore was to set sail for Nassau and from there to proceed toward his destination. Simultaneously Burnside was to depart with his corps to apply the required military pressure. The long-deferred blow was about to be delivered.

Then the unexpected happened. Gilmore, on the point of leaving, received a startling telegram from Lincoln. Its gist was a peremptory order to stay at home. A letter which followed announced that Grant had changed his mind. After appraising Lee's strength and the prospective Union losses, he concluded—correctly as it turned out—that he needed every man he could get, and that all extraneous operations, including the expedition to Wilmington, would have to be abandoned. Grant's word being final, Burnside took his corps to the banks of the Rappahannock and carried it through the Wilderness Campaign, where it was decimated before it reached the James River.

In spite of this setback, the sponsors of the Wilmington plan did not give up. When Grant came to rest before Petersburg and started digging in for a siege, Mr. Kidder visited him, accompanied by Governor John A. Andrew, of Massachusetts. In a long conversation they gained the impression that the enterprise would be revived. Their impression proved faulty. Grant, filled with new respect for Lee's prowess, refused to detach Burnside's corps. Disappointed and convinced that they were right, Kidder and Gil-

more appealed to Lincoln, but met with a firm rebuff. "Do you hire men to do your work, and then do it yourself?" Gilmore quoted the President as having replied.

In the light of present-day knowledge, it would appear that Grant erred in canceling the Wilmington expedition for, protected by trenches and elaborate earthworks, he could easily have spared sufficient troops for the enterprise. True, his army was still licking its wounds after the recent blood-letting overland campaign, but Lee, too, had been badly hurt and for a long time would be in no condition to undertake important offensive operations.

As a result of Grant's decision, Fort Fisher continued to protect the blockade trade, thereby prolonging hostilities, until it was finally taken in January 1865. North Carolina remained part of the Confederacy to the end of the war. But who can tell how matters would have turned out *if* Edward Kidder's sea captain had not fallen ill, but had been able to transmit his master's message without delay, thus hastening the necessary recruiting by two months? In January 1864, when the expedition would have been ready, Burnside was available and Grant was still commanding in the West. Meade, lacking the power of a lieutenant general, would undoubtedly have done as Lincoln wished. Vance, as shown by the records, was then willing and able to co-operate; what he might have done later is problematical. *If* the two months' delay, due to the sea captain's illness, had not occurred, the chances are that North Carolina would have rejoined the Union, with what consequences it is difficult to say specifically. There can be no question, though, that the war would have been shortened, and that thousands of valuable lives on both sides would have been saved at a time when the issue of the struggle was no longer in doubt.

1864

*In which it is proved that higher rank does not always go
hand in hand with better judgment*

IF A Union officer had not refused to obey an order, the army in which he served might have been destroyed, instead of scoring a spectacular victory.

On a cold February morning in the year 1863, the 125th Ohio Infantry regiment marched out of Nashville on the turnpike which led south to Columbia. The object of the march was to reconnoiter the environs of Franklin, distant eighteen miles from the Tennessee capital. At the head of the regiment rode its thirty-three-year-old hard-hitting Colonel Emerson Opdycke. He had inherited his fighting blood from his grandfather, who had been a captain in the Revolutionary War, and from his father, who had served in the War of 1812. When Lincoln issued his first call, Emerson Opdycke had enlisted in an Ohio regiment and in two years had risen from the rank of lieutenant to that of a colonel. He had been wounded at Shiloh, and later was to distinguish himself in the battles of Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge and Resaca. Opdycke was a handsome man. His high, intellectual forehead proclaimed the thinker; his clear and penetrating eyes usually wore a friendly expression; his face, covered with side whiskers, a mustache and a Van Dyke beard, denoted a man of strong character and quick action.

The experiences of Emma Thompson related in this chapter were told to the authors by herself. In compliance with her wish, her real name is being withheld.



BATTLE OF FRANKLIN, TENNESSEE

When the regiment came within a mile or two of Franklin, Opdycke learned that the town was occupied by Confederate cavalry. Without hesitation, he ordered an attack. Wading the icy Harpeth

River up to their breasts, the Ohioans scattered the gray horsemen, entered the streets and proceeded to make themselves at home. Franklin became a military post, and Colonel Opdycke its commander.

During the next few weeks the regiment was in frequent contact with Confederate patrols, stabbing at them, taking and losing prisoners, suffering a few casualties. Colonel Opdycke made himself familiar with the environs of Franklin, as far down the Columbia Pike as Thompson's Station. This knowledge, of little moment at the time, was to prove valuable before the war was over.

By April 1863 the garrison of Franklin had grown to eight thousand men, and on the tenth of the month the Southern General Earl Van Dorn attacked it, advancing in full sight of the Union pickets out on the Columbia Pike. The Confederates succeeded in entering the town, but Opdycke drove them out again. The combat was officially designated as a battle, although it scarcely deserved the name; yet, it was to be the forerunner of a more important event to follow.

In one of the southernmost houses of Franklin along the Columbia Turnpike lived a nine-year-old girl with blue eyes and curly blonde hair. Her name was Emma Thompson. The Thompson home stood on a slight elevation, from which one could see the countryside, as it stretched in gentle undulations southward, until two miles away the view was obstructed by heights known as the Winstead Hills. In spite of her youth, Emma had already seen many soldiers, both Union and Confederate. Sometimes they had fought close to her doorsteps; at other times they had only marched by. Of late, however, there had been few of them. The war had moved far off, and peace had returned to Franklin. Hence, when Emma was awakened by the steady tramp of soldiers at early dawn on November 30, 1864, she was somewhat surprised. As she

looked out of her bedroom window she saw Union troops in long columns stream in from the direction of Columbia. The soldiers looked haggard, as though they had been on the go all night, but their step was firm, and they seemed in good spirits. Emma observed that these men were not coming from a big fight; nor did they look as if they had suffered a defeat. Why then, she wondered, were they traveling the wrong way? Union soldiers should have been headed toward Dixie, not toward their homes. With a little cry of joy she clasped her throat. Could it be that the war was over?

Emma's father was fighting for the Confederacy, and she had not seen him for a year or more. Her mother lay sick in a hospital. She was alone in the house, and when it became plain to her that she was not looking at a detachment, but at a whole army, she became frightened. She dressed quickly, and as soon as an opening in the marching ranks presented itself, she ran across to the Carter mansion, which stood on the west side of the turnpike not far from where she lived. It was a large, solid brick building, and a safer place to be in than the little frame house which she called her home. She knew that Mr. Carter would shelter her. People usually went to Mr. Carter when they needed help. He was an elderly man, over six feet tall, and highly respected by everyone in town. Large barns nestled around his residence, beyond which stood a smokehouse and, a few hundred feet away, an old cotton gin.

This morning Mr. Carter was much troubled, as he had good reason to be. Among his five grown children who resided with him was a Confederate colonel, who had recently been paroled; the colonel's situation under the circumstances would be a delicate one. Another son, Theodore, was serving as a captain under General John B. Hood, whose forces, Mr. Carter reckoned, were then not far away, in pursuit of the retreating Union army. Could Theodore be among them? He had been absent for two years.

While the members of the family were speculating on what the day would bring forth, hoping that no battle would be fought near them, a Union officer entered, introducing himself as General Jacob D. Cox. He was polite and considerate and kept patting Emma's head while he was speaking. When asked about the safety of those who had assembled around Mr. Carter, he advised them to stay where they were, but to retire to the cellar should fighting become serious around the house. He expressed doubts, however, that this would be the case.

The Carters had witnessed fighting before from close by, and men had been wounded and killed on their premises, in the yard, even in the house itself. Mr. Carter was weighing his chances: if his folks left their home, it was certain to be pillaged; if they stayed, they risked their lives. He was anxious about his property, but more so about his next of kin. Finally he decided to stay, at least for the time being. To be on the safe side, however, he sent the family down to the basement, and Emma went along. Each was ordered to carry a bundle of clothes, which could be quickly strapped on his back. If flight became necessary, at least a little clothing would be salvaged; besides, the bundles would form some protection against stray bullets.

By noon the steady flow of soldiers had become a mere trickle. From his front porch Mr. Carter saw breastworks being thrown up five feet high, with a head log on top. They were being built in a semicircle around the town, all the way from the upper Harpeth River down to where the stream skirted Franklin as it left the town. The trenches wound around the Carter building, then crossed the Columbia Pike and formed a salient near the gin house. The Federal command, it appeared, was in the hands of General John M. Schofield, who had recently led one of Sherman's armies into Georgia. Carter had not seen him, for he had gone straight to the home of one Dr. Cliffe, a well-known Union sym-

pathizer. There General Cox, the next in command, joined him as soon as he had seen to it that his orders for the erection of the barricades had been properly executed.

Out at the Winstead Hills a body of Union troops were watching the road from Columbia. They constituted the rear guard of Schofield's army, were under the command of General George D. Wagner and consisted of three brigades, totaling about five thousand men. All this Mr. Carter pieced together from snatches of conversation to which he managed to listen.

In the early afternoon Schofield and Cox held a conference at Dr. Cliffe's house, discussing the precarious situation in which they found themselves and how it had developed. After General Sherman had driven General Hood out of Atlanta two months ago, the latter had decided to invade Tennessee, in the hope that Sherman would follow him. If he did, Georgia was safe. The march to the sea would be given up for a pursuit which led in the opposite direction. Hood had a chance to succeed, provided he could reach Nashville first and occupy it, which should not be too difficult; no one had expected this move, and the capital of Tennessee was almost defenseless. There Hood would replenish his supplies, after which he could threaten Kentucky and the Ohio valley cities. He might even turn east and menace Grant's rear near Richmond. He had under him a fine army of over forty thousand men, all experienced veterans of which any general could be proud.

Sherman dared not begin his seaward march until he knew what Hood had in mind. But the Confederate commander was very close-mouthed about that. Then Jefferson Davis, always an indiscreet talker, made a public speech in which he tore the veil from the secret. "Be of good cheer," he addressed some Tennessee troops, "for within a short while your faces will be turned homeward, and your feet be pressing Tennessee soil." Sherman, thus

forewarned, immediately sent General George H. Thomas, a most reliable lieutenant, to take charge at Nashville, with orders to pull in all available troops from outlying posts. In addition he ordered Schofield with some fourteen thousand men to Thomas' aid. With these reinforcements, he felt certain the Rock of Chickamauga would be able to take care of the situation. Sherman was footloose again and could execute his march to the sea.

Thomas was not as confident as those who had such implicit faith in him. His troops were scattered all the way from Chattanooga to Missouri. Most of them were fresh recruits or clerks who had received only rudimentary training. The only seasoned soldiers on whom he could depend were with General A. J. Smith in Missouri, from where transportation was slow; they could not possibly reach him until December. In the meantime, breastworks had to be built, horses for the cavalry bought and provisions of all kinds rushed into Nashville to prepare for a possible siege. The picture looked dark. Schofield, who had been sent to reinforce him, was still far away, almost as far as the enemy himself. If that officer could only fight delaying actions to give Thomas time! And that, he recognized, would be risky. Hood had by far the greater numbers.

Things might have gone badly for the Union had Hood carried out his plans with the speed essential for their success. But he lingered. It was not altogether his fault. One of the railroads which was to carry his troops had been torn up, and the South lacked the means to put it into good repair. The country roads were in frightful condition, the horses so lean and weak that whole regiments had to be detailed to pull the artillery through the clinging mud. Yet, in spite of these handicaps Hood should have made better time, knowing as he did that every day counted.

When on October 28 the Confederates at last got into motion,

they found Schofield had outmarched them to Columbia and entrenched himself there. It was not a desirable position. The broad Duck River was behind him, and if he should be outflanked, he would be cut off. But Thomas kept sending orders that the position be held as long as possible, for conditions at Nashville were still chaotic.

When Hood reached the outskirts of Columbia, he wisely refused to attack in front. Instead, he flanked the town by crossing above it. Schofield retreated hastily to Spring Hill, twelve miles to the northeast. This time, however, Hood arrived before more than a fraction of the Union army had assembled. If he now did what seemed obvious—get in between the two Federal armies—Schofield was lost and Thomas was in great danger.

Then developed one of the unexplained mysteries of the war. Although Hood's army lay within sight of the highway, he allowed Schofield to march through, practically unmolested. All night long, from November 29 to November 30, long columns of Union men and wagons pushed north, so close to the Confederates that some Union soldiers wandered over to the enemy's campfires to light their pipes. Yet no orders came to break up the procession. Hood slept soundly all night. When he woke up in the morning his prey had escaped.

Of all the blunders recorded in the Civil War, this one stands out as one of the most inexplicable, the most inexcusable, the most calamitous. Where the responsibility lay has never been conclusively demonstrated.

Hood was so furious that he let his emotion overcome his judgment. If the Union army made its next stop at Franklin, he would attack it, come what may; for, once Schofield was safe behind the fortifications of Nashville, the whole Confederate campaign would be a failure. His dejected troops were urged to follow Schofield

with the utmost speed. Those Yanks should not escape a second time.

As Schofield and Cox pored over their maps, they discovered a remarkable resemblance between their present position and the one at Columbia. There Hood had flanked Schofield out of an entrenched camp; he would probably try the same tactics again. A frontal attack was always costly, and Hood, without hope of increasing his forces, had to use them sparingly. Schofield and Hood had been schoolmates, and Cox also knew Hood well. Both generals agreed that they were reading his mind correctly. There would be no frontal attack. At three o'clock in the afternoon the meeting was over. Schofield remained at Dr. Cliffe's house, and Cox repaired to the front to act as commander in the field. Meanwhile the withdrawal would continue. The wagon train was already across the Harpeth River, and the whole little army could be on its way to Nashville before nightfall.

It was now early afternoon. The weather was beautiful. Little Emma Thompson, hearing nothing to disturb her, came up from the cellar and sat down on the porch. In the slight haze of the beautiful Indian-summer day she observed a stir in the Union rear guard on Winstead Hills. The troops seemed to retreat closer to the main lines. A few minutes later she saw the reason for it. Away yonder, where the Columbia Turnpike twisted its way over the Winstead Hills, men in gray were filing down the road. First they came in small groups, then in a solid mass which took up the whole width of the road.

Emma's sharp young eyes now espied something else, and it made her heart beat faster. The Union rear guard had ceased retreating and was halted five hundred yards in front of the Carter house. He was evidently preparing for a stand there and worked

desperately to throw up trenches. They, too, must have seen how many Confederates were coming down on them, for they were handling their picks with hectic speed. When one tired, he handed the tool to other willing hands. Mr. Carter, who stood next to her, shook his head in wonderment. How did this small band expect to stand up against Hood's entire army? Emma became greatly excited. She had never seen a real battle; perhaps she would see one now.

Had she been present at the front, she would have witnessed an unusual scene. General Wagner, who was in command of the rear guard, had just posted his first two brigades when Colonel Opdycke, with the third and last brigade, arrived from the Winstead Hills. During the retreat from Columbia his knowledge of the country, acquired the year before, had been of inestimable value; he had held off the pursuers, making use of every natural obstacle. Now he was ordered to place his brigade next to the others.

Instead of obeying the order, Opdycke gave Wagner a cold stare.

"You cannot mean that, General," he said.

"I do mean it," Wagner shouted. "Please get into position."

"Then I refuse to obey your order, sir," Opdycke declared firmly.

The general's face turned red. "You refuse to obey my order, Colonel?"

"I do. Your order, sir, is nothing short of suicidal. We cannot possibly hold out here, and we shall only be in the way of our own artillery, when the enemy attacks. Last year I fought over this ground, and I know every square inch of it. Between here and Franklin there is not enough shelter for a mouse to hide in."

"You understand, Colonel, that I can have you court-martialed for this?"

"I do."

The two men looked straight at each other.

"My orders are to hold this position," General Wagner said after a few moments.

"And I am taking my men behind the breastworks, orders or no orders," Opdycke repeated. "Good day, sir." He started for the main fortifications and ordered his brigade to follow him.

General Wagner lost some of his aggressiveness. He had never been through a military school, had made his way to the top by sheer ability and hard fighting. He looked toward his two brigades, which were now lined up in a V-shaped formation, the tip of their wedge turned toward the enemy. Then he cast a glance toward Franklin. Opdycke was right. The two brigades would not last five minutes against Hood's army, and the ground between them and the rest of the army was hopelessly flat. Adding a third brigade would not help. He himself did not understand why Schofield had ordered him to hold this impossible position. Nevertheless, he would do as he had been told.

At last he sighed and shrugged his shoulders. "Well, Opdycke," he said, "fight when and where you damned please. We all know you'll fight."

He accompanied his recalcitrant subordinate a few hundred feet, then returned to his men. Shortly after, Opdycke's brigade passed Emma Thompson and came to rest on the lawn behind the Carter house. There they lay down in perfect order, their rifles close to their hands. Nothing more of interest was to be seen there, and Emma again began watching the front. Strange things were going on there. A few soldiers with stripes on their sleeves, marking them as noncommissioned officers, were marching up and down behind the advanced Union troops. Their bayonets were drawn, as if they were forced to keep reluctant men in line. The wind carried to her fragments of loud talk. She could not catch all the words, but it was plain that some soldiers objected to something,

and a few were on the point of open mutiny. Once she thought she heard Wagner's voice.

"We'll fight the whole damned Rebel army, if they attack us," he bellowed.

A Federal officer rode up to the Carter house, alighted and trained his glass on the field. The Confederates were moving against Wagner's slight works. A volley stopped them for a moment, but they quickly recovered and swarmed all around the barricade.

"Why don't they call them back?" the officer exclaimed, stamping his foot. "Why don't they call them back?" He did not know that Wagner was obeying an ambiguous order in the way a brave man would interpret it. Poor fellow! The fault was Schofield's, who still could have recalled the exposed brigades; but he had gone to a fort north of the town, so far away that he was quite out of touch with his army. After the battle he would make Wagner the scapegoat and demote him, and the scapegoat would say goodbye to his career with a broken heart.

Presently Emma's attention was diverted by something she had never seen before. Dozens of rabbits came bounding toward her, acting peculiarly. They would make a few leaps, then stop, look over their shoulders and scamper off again. As the tramp of thousands of human feet came nearer, the little animals, which so far had only acted as if astonished, became frightened and scattered in all directions. At the same time a covey of quail rose into the air with a whirring noise and departed in a thundering cloud of beating wings.

The officer at the Carter house dropped his glass and uttered a fearsome oath. It was all over now. Wagner's men were being swallowed up in a seething mass of gray and butternut. Those who did not surrender were running desperately toward the main breastworks. The Confederates, who up to then had marched in

perfect alignment, battle flags waving, officers riding in front as if on parade, now also broke into a run. To the little girl it appeared that they were all heading straight for her and the Carter home. With palpitating heart she fled back to the cellar. There the Carter family also arrived in quick order. They all were breathing hard.

Along the breastworks the Union defenders swore with the fury of frustration. The guns of their artillery were loaded to the muzzle with grapeshot and canister, and on the level ground in front of them they could have blasted those Rebels to perdition, had their own comrades not formed a protective screen. They saw General Wagner riding in the midst of his troops, and those who survived said they had never seen an officer try so hard to rally his men, nor heard such sulphurous language. All he had with which to assert his authority was a broken stick. He swung it on everyone who came near him and, planting his horse across the turnpike, endeavored to block the retreat singlehanded. He might as well have tried to stem the tides. His horse was literally swept along with the crowd. Riding backward step by step, he kept alternately yelling encouragement and insults to his soldiers, until all hope for further resistance was gone. Then, with bowed head, he followed in the wake of his fleeing troops.

Up to the moment of Hood's onslaught, Schofield and Cox had been sure that they had read his mind correctly. An hour earlier Schofield had wired Thomas that Hood would not attack in front but was about to begin a flanking movement. The maneuver at Columbia was to be repeated and would be met. The two generals could not know that Hood's closest advisers, B. F. Cheatham, N. B. Forrest and others, had favored this flank attack and foresaw enormous losses if Hood insisted on storming a well-entrenched position. Hood, however, had waved their counsel aside with impatience.

When Schofield found how grievously he had erred, and that

Hood really was attacking in front, he was dumfounded and quit Dr. Cliffe's home so abruptly that he left behind him the headquarters dispatches and some of his personal belongings. Had the doctor's wife not hidden them, they would have fallen into Hood's hands.

The first fugitives of Wagner's brigades had now reached the breastworks and tumbled over them, totally exhausted. A few Confederates went over with them. The cry, "Let's go into the works with the blue-bellies," arose from thousands of throats. Through the gap on the turnpike which had been kept open for the Federals, dense masses began to pour in. No one could tell how many of them were friends, how many enemies. The artillerists behind the embrasures, their supports swept away in the general melee, removed the primers from their guns and disappeared. In the ditch on the outside of the ramparts wounded men and horses struggled in a writhing pile from which came bloodcurdling sounds of pain and despair.

The momentum of the onrush carried more than a thousand Confederates into the town. Others, taking the place of the Union artillerists, primed the abandoned guns with powder from cartridges and turned them against the defenders. Several hundred feet of the breastworks were already in the hands of the Confederates. Another few minutes and Schofield's whole army would be pressed against the Harpeth River and forced to surrender.

Colonel Opdycke had been watching the dismal picture with a cool eye, and his men were watching him in turn. The year before, Van Dorn had come in this way, and had been thrown out again. He smiled grimly. The wave of humanity was crashing into Franklin and began rolling down the Columbia road toward the river, when he rose to his feet.

"Forward, men, march! Give them cold steel!" The men jumped up as if touched by an invisible spring. From where they had been

placed, they were in an ideal position to check the movement. They stormed forward on both sides of the highway and took the victory-drunk, panting Southerners by surprise. Like a living wedge they cut their way through the moving mass of friend and foe. Stragglers stopped in their flight, turned around and joined in the counterattack. Cox also had collected a few regiments and rendered valuable help. For twenty minutes Opdycke bored in, inched forward, bored in again. He was always where the knot was thickest. He emptied his revolver, then broke it over the head of a stubborn Rebel fighter. Not yet satisfied, he picked up a musket and swung it like a madman on Hood's men. Union soldiers who hung back received the same treatment. Closer and closer his men came to the gap in the works. Now they reached it. One more desperate struggle, and the town was cleared except for a thousand prisoners who remained behind. General Cox, riding over a carpet of prostrate bodies, stretched out his hand to Colonel Opdycke. "Opdycke," he exclaimed, "you have saved the day!"

All this time Mr. Carter and his family had been cowering in the cellar. They heard bullets spattering against the walls, and once a solid ball from a gun went straight through the house. The noise of falling bricks mingled strangely with the rumble of rifle shots and the cries of the embattled armies. At last midnight came and the firing ceased. In the darkness no one noticed that Emma had left. She emerged from the cellar, pale, frightened, but glad to escape her confinement. Alone she climbed the stairs. The floors were covered with bleeding soldiers, who had crawled into the house with the instinct of wounded animals. In the garret Emma noticed a glimmer of light. She opened the door, and there, sitting on the floor, were some thirty Union soldiers playing cards. At her entrance one of them jumped to his feet.

"Hold that girl," he shouted, "she'll give us away!" Emma fled.

The soldier, afraid to show himself, returned to his game of cards.

The Carters also had left the cellar and had gone to the living room, where they stood around a Confederate private who had just come in. He said he had a sad message to deliver. Captain Theodore Carter had fallen and was probably lying somewhere within a few hundred feet of his home. With a catch in his voice, Mr. Carter bade everyone take a lantern and go out on a search. Emma stumbled along, half hopeful, half afraid that she might be the one to find the boy; but after many hours he was picked up by others. A bullet was found imbedded in his forehead. While trying to clear a hedge under which he had often played as a boy, he and his horse had been shot at the same time.

The dying man was brought into the house and given all the care which human kindness could devise. He lingered on for several days, conscious and apparently without pain. The girls whom he had known since childhood came to visit him and brought delicacies to his bedside. When at last he closed his eyes a happy smile curled around his youthful lips.

The morning following the battle the Union troops were gone. They probably were already in or near Nashville. In front of the town, especially near the Carter home, the dead were lying in layers, some of them six deep. Wounded were carried to houses in cartloads. Emma saw one man crawling on all fours in a circle, moaning in agony. As she backed away from him she passed a heap of mangled bodies and hastened her steps. Then she heard a man's voice.

"Take those bodies off me," he begged, "I can't breathe." The girl ran crying into the house to get help. It took several men to disentangle the wounded soldier; soon after he was pulled out, he expelled his last breath in a whistling sound and died.

Emma sat down on the porch of the Carter house and stared at the battlefield. Suddenly she jumped up, unwilling to believe her

eyes. There in a ditch, not a hundred feet away, stood a Confederate colonel. Holding a sword in his hand, he looked as if he were giving orders to his soldiers. Was the battle to begin anew? A few stretcher-bearers happened to pass by, and Emma pointed wordlessly at the uncanny spectacle. One of the men dropped his burden and went to investigate. In a moment he was back, a trifle shaken.

"Go back into the house," he said kindly, "these sights are nothing for a little girl like you."

"But will those men start to fight again?" Emma asked.

The stretcher-bearer shook his head. "The colonel is dead," he answered, "and all those around him are dead, too. But there are so many of them in the ditch they are holding each other up. Now scoot!"

Emma scooted.

On the lawn of the Carter house, where Opdycke's soldiers had been lying in wait, before they won for themselves a place in history, Emma saw a man sitting in an armchair. He had only one leg and was carrying the stump of one arm in a sling. His handsome face was partly buried behind his remaining arm, and he seemed unaware that tears were rolling into his soft brown beard.

"Who is that man?" she asked Mr. Carter.

"That's General Hood, Emma. Don't talk so loud."

"And why is the poor man crying?" the girl persisted.

Mr. Carter took her by the hand and pulled her away.

"He is crying," he said in a whisper, "because he lost the battle." Then he added, as to himself, "and the Confederacy, God knows, has lost its last hope."

A few days later General Thomas issued an official communication recommending Colonel Opdycke for promotion. The language he used is not often found in a military document.

He [Colonel Opdycke] displayed the very highest qualities as a commander. It is not saying too much to declare that but for the skillful dispositions made by Colonel Opdycke (all of which was done entirely on his own judgment) . . . disaster instead of victory would have fallen on us at Franklin.

As a result of this recommendation, Colonel Opdycke was promoted to the rank of brevet major general, the appointment to date from the day of the battle of Franklin.

Opdycke was perhaps the only officer who was ever promoted for insubordination. His also is the only known case in which an *If* of history has been officially endorsed by the general under whose command it played a determinative part.

1861-1867

*In which a dying town furnishes the background
for queer happenings*

IF AN advertisement printed in the Selma, Alabama, *Dispatch* on December 2, 1864, had brought forth a favorable response, Lincoln might have been killed by a paid assassin and not by the actor John Wilkes Booth.

This is the way the advertisement read:

ONE MILLION DOLLARS WANTED TO HAVE PEACE BY THE
1ST OF MARCH

If the citizens of the Southern Confederacy will furnish me with the cash, or good securities for the sum of \$1,000,000, I will cause the lives of Abraham Lincoln, William H. Seward, and Andrew Johnson to be taken by the 1st of March next. This will give us peace, and satisfy the world that cruel tyrants cannot live in a 'land of liberty.' If this is not accomplished, nothing will be claimed beyond the sum of \$50,000 in advance, which is supposed to be necessary to reach and slaughter the three villains.

I will give, myself, \$1,000 towards this patriotic purpose. Everyone wishing to contribute will address Box X, Cahaba, Alabama.

In the year 1832, a twenty-seven-year-old lawyer named George W. Gayle proudly hung out his shingle in the town of Cahaba, Alabama. The Gayles were an old Southern family which had distinguished itself in early American history. Colonel Matthew

Gayle, of South Carolina, had fought in the Revolutionary War under General Francis Marion, and prior to that the name appears frequently among high officials in British service. John Gayle, a cousin of the young Cahaba lawyer, was a man of brilliant talents and became governor of Alabama at the age of thirty-one. George Washington Gayle himself had been born in Abbeville, South Carolina. He had moved with his parents to Alabama at the age of four and had attended the public schools at St. Stevens, the territorial capital, now a half-forgotten settlement buried under soil and sand. Later Gayle studied law at Tuscaloosa, acquitted himself well and was admitted to the bar in 1832. Immediately after graduation he opened his law office.

The young man had selected Cahaba for his new venture because it offered the best prospects of any town in Alabama. Only recently laid out as the capital of the state, it never had to go through the adolescent recklessness of a frontier settlement. No makeshift shanties marred its broad streets, which were named after trees in the same manner as Philadelphia had named hers. The men who built their homes there were cultured and of fine stock. Many of them were well-to-do and spent their money lavishly on houses built in beautiful architectural styles, with twenty, even thirty rooms, marble floors, expensive tapestries and imported French furniture. When Lafayette visited the town in 1823, one of his hosts even installed a primitive air-conditioning plant in his dining room by running cold water from an artesian well through pipes cleverly concealed in the walls. It was said that he spent fifteen thousand dollars in three days while he entertained his illustrious guest.

By 1820, only two years after its founding, Cahaba had two newspapers, a bank, a law office and several hotels. In a stately building, appropriately called the Pantheon, all denominations were invited to worship until their churches could be completed.

A courthouse, a female academy and a Masonic lodge followed in quick succession. Land values rose fabulously. In 1822 an acre on the outskirts of the town was quoted at forty-one dollars. In a few weeks it had gone up to seventy dollars, and soon afterward an unimproved lot in the central portion of the town sold for five thousand twenty-five dollars. A sale of one hundred eighty-four lots brought one hundred twenty thousand dollars, all of which was spent on government buildings. The new Capitol was a square-built structure, two stories high, topped by an imposing dome. Offices of the state officials occupied the first floor; the upper story contained two large halls, which served the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Unfortunately, the territorial committee which had selected the site of the new capital had failed to reckon with the annual spring rains which were wont to swell the Cahaba and Alabama rivers, between which the town was situated. In 1825 Cahaba experienced its first flood. A muddy, turbulent stream raged through the beautiful streets, uprooting trees and creating havoc among the houses. The pioneer spirit of the inhabitants and their local pride were inclined to overlook the disaster, but the legislators, whose homes were elsewhere, did not relish being rowed to the Capitol to hold their sessions. The swirling waters so weakened the foundation of the building that one wall collapsed. As soon as the flood subsided the law-makers voted to move the state capital to Tuscaloosa.

Cahaba reeled from the blow. Many tore down their homes and moved them to near-by Selma or floated them down to Mobile. Rows of residences were abandoned, and grass grew in the streets where traffic had ceased. A goodly portion of the population, however, remained loyal to the community. Cahaba was still the seat of Dallas County, and no one could rob it of its fertile surroundings. Henceforth it would build its fortune on agriculture

rather than on politics. Cotton plantations, with thousands of slaves worth millions of dollars, sprang up in all directions. The politicians and their camp followers, the gamblers, confidence men and painted ladies moved out, while solid business men moved in and refurnished the empty homes. Spacious warehouses were erected along the water fronts. In a few years the former state capital was more lively, more attractive, more prosperous than before. Cahaba became a station on the first telegraph line laid in Alabama, and it was a matter of great pride to its inhabitants that the people of Selma had to ride eight miles to Cahaba if they wanted to send messages. William L. Yancey, the fiery orator, whose influence would some day help lead the South into Secession, and who subsequently was a Confederate representative to Great Britain, became a Cahabian and edited the *Reporter*. U.S. Senator William Rufus King was a frequent and welcome visitor. One of the early settlers was N. H. R. Dawson, who had married a daughter of Robert Todd, and therefore was a brother-in-law of Lincoln. Many former soldiers of Napoleon's shattered armies, unwilling to accept defeat in their native country, found a new home here. Before long Cahaba could boast a galaxy of unusual and brilliant men among its three thousand citizens.

It was into these pleasant surroundings that young Gayle moved in 1832 to start his law practice. He married a niece of Senator King, thus adding to his prestige and material interests. When he built his own residence it was pretentious not only in style but also in location, for it stood in the exact center of the town, at the corner of Vine Street and Capitol Avenue, across from the former State Capitol. His wife died at an early age and Mr. Gayle married again. Three daughters were born to him and they helped enliven his household.

Gayle's rise to a modest fortune and local prominence was swift. A year after he had settled in Cahaba, he was elected to the state

legislature, where he subsequently served several terms. Eventually he aspired to the speakership of the House, an ambition which he failed to see gratified; but he did attain the chairmanship of the ways and means committee, thus gaining considerable political power. In 1840 President Van Buren appointed him Attorney for the Southern District of Alabama, a post he held for some time, ably discharging his duties. By 1852, when Senator King, his uncle by his first marriage, was elected Vice-President of the United States, the affable Mr. Gayle had become one of the leading men of the state and could point to many friends and a wide following. His clientele extended from the Tennessee border to Mobile. He was a facile writer and took an active part in discussing the topics of the times. His contributions to the papers of Cahaba and Selma were respected on account of their fearlessness, for Mr. Gayle was a man of high courage and displayed an unshakable faith in whatever cause he espoused.

As the first half of the century closed, however, it became plain that Cahaba had seen its best days. The coming of the railroads took away much of its importance, now that waterways were not as vital as they had been heretofore. Mr. Gayle noted the decline with sorrow. He also saw the shadow of the coming sectional strife grow longer and darker. His fluid pen, busier than ever, entered wholeheartedly into the slavery and Secession controversy. Few presented the Southern side with more fervor and eloquence, and none with deeper conviction.

When war was declared, Cahaba was among the first to raise a regiment, the Cahaba Rifles, and Dallas County also cheerfully contributed its quota. But now the downhill slide of the town started in earnest. Selma, only a few miles away, was mushrooming into a great arsenal city, and many people from Cahaba moved there, draining the population of its hardiest elements. Wagonloads of brick and furniture rolled through the streets, as houses

were broken up and carted away. Mr. Gayle bravely clung to his homestead, even though he realized that the tides were going out. For those who sought easy wealth by profiteering he expressed open contempt and stubbornly resisted all invitations to take professional advantage of the war boom.

Throughout the following months, Cahaba continued on its downward course. Nevertheless, Mr. Gayle and his family, left almost friendless, continued to walk the streets with heads erect. The three daughters, still living at home, willingly shared the parents' solitude, painful as it must have been for them to see their native town crumble into ruins.

After two years of war a new glimmer of hope shone on the former state capital. Cahaba was chosen as the location of a camp for Federal prisoners. An abandoned brick warehouse facing the Alabama River served the purpose and was called Castle Morgan, although there was nothing of a medieval castle about it, except its utter lack of comfort and sanitation. In many respects it was worse even than notorious Andersonville. The surgeon in charge, Dr. R. H. Whitfield, reported on March 31, 1864, that the total area of the prison comprised fifteen thousand square feet, but that the roof, leaky as it was, did not cover the entire building. Into this space, which was served by a single fireplace, were crowded six hundred men. Later, when the stockade held three thousand prisoners, each of them could call only five square feet his own, Andersonville, by comparison, allowed them five times as much. The smoke from the green wood furnished the prisoners sometimes made breathing next to impossible. The drinking water ran for two hundred yards along an open gutter and was contaminated with "the washings . . . of soldiers, citizens and negroes," and "the filth of hogs, dogs, cows and horses," as Dr. Whitfield stated in his report. Nonetheless, the prison guards brought new life into

the old streets, and their letters proved a lure to a number of refugees. Some of them bought property and established their homes among the old settlers. But the character of the community had changed. Neither the prison guards nor the refugees were of the fine stock which had formed the nucleus of the former population, and the prison itself became a cancerous growth which threatened to engulf the town in its own moral and physical morass.

In November, 1864, one Captain Hiram Solon Hanchette, an officer in the 16th Illinois Cavalry, was captured by General Nathan B. Forrest, and delivered to Castle Morgan. In private life Hanchette had practiced law in Woodstock, Illinois. He was of medium height, possessed dark, searching eyes and great physical strength. Hardly had he entered the stockade when he organized a bold plot for a general prison break.

There were usually nine guards inside the prison walls, and Captain Hanchette proposed to have double their number of prisoners engage them in conversation. Just when these guards were about to be relieved they were to be silenced by blankets thrown over their heads and safely stowed away with threats of instant death if they should make an outcry. Nine prisoners would then don Confederate uniforms, and the relief would be given the same surprise treatment. Equipped with eighteen rifles and cartridge boxes, the armed prisoners would pass through the still open gate, overcome the sleeping guards and free the remainder of the inmates. The Union soldiers were then to march to Selma, pillage the arsenal, help themselves to artillery, small arms, horses and wagons, and try to reach the Federal garrison at Pensacola, about a hundred and fifty miles distant.

The plot was well thought out and came within a hairsbreadth of success. The first nine guards were secured according to plan, but the relief squad was attacked a few seconds too soon. A vigil-

ant corporal, who had just entered, was rushed while he was still too near the wall. He jumped outside and barred the gate before his assailants could stop him.

Captain Hanchette was identified as the leader of the plotters and put into a dungeon. The Union commander in Vicksburg, anxious to save an officer of such outstanding qualities, offered a general in exchange for him. The offer was accepted. Hanchette was marched to Selma, but the guards shot him on the way. It was rumored that they had acted under orders.

Shortly after the prison break had been stifled, the relative peacefulness of Cahaba was again disturbed. The rising waters of the two rivers once more threatened to flood the town and Castle Morgan. The camp superintendent, with only a handful of young boys and old men to guard the prisoners, was in a dilemma. Undecided what to do, he wavered until the water inside the stockade rose to above the knees of the men. Finally, after they had suffered intensely for two days from the icy flood, he allowed them to build floats on which they could perch until the water subsided. Hundreds either died from exposure or carried the ill effects of the torment through life.

A few weeks later General James H. Wilson's raiders came so close to Cahaba that the commandant of the camp paroled all prisoners and sent them to Vicksburg. Misfortune, however, followed them even after liberation. Most of them were given passage on the river boat *Sultana*, and perished when that ill-fated steamer caught fire near Memphis on April 27, 1865.

Meanwhile, Mr. Gayle's clients had steadily diminished in number and wealth. He himself remained steadfast, fighting fiercely for his old conceptions of life. Anyone who acted contrary to his views became a target for his sharp pen. He wrote vitriolic articles against the Northern invaders and bitterly attacked many of Jeffer-

son Davis' war measures. The columns of the *Selma Dispatch* re-echoed his radical views on the military draft which he considered undemocratic and unconstitutional. Disgusted and impoverished, he still held to his forlorn outpost, for Cahaba had become only a pitiful memory of its former self. Even the Bell Tavern, once a famous center of gaiety and Southern hospitality, now served as a hospital for wounded soldiers. There had not been enough paying guests for a long time to keep it going as a hostelry, and lately there had been no guests at all.

The end of the long war was approaching at last. General Wilson's cavalry division of some fourteen thousand men was roaring toward Selma, and the exhausted Confederates could offer only feeble opposition. General Forrest, who commanded what men were available, did all that could be done, but the state militia ran away after the firing of the first volley, and Wilson gained an easy victory. It was then, on April 8, the day before Lee's surrender, that Cahaba once more occupied the center of the stage. In a beautiful mansion the two generals met to discuss the exchange of prisoners and after a prolonged conference parted with mutual respect. Why the meeting was held at Cahaba the records do not disclose, but the prosaic reason may have been that in Cahaba, miles away from the scenes of battle, a bountiful meal could still be had, and in this case actually was obtained. Or perhaps History, in a kindly mood, wanted to rekindle once more the flames of past glory before the town definitely entered the path to oblivion.

Pathetic as the autumn of Mr. Gayle's life had turned out to be, it seemed that he was destined to end it uneventfully among his decaying environs. Then something happened that brought his little world tumbling down on him and carried him into disgrace and to the brink of death.

One day in November 1864, the elite of Selma met for an old-time hunting party. Mr. Gayle was among those invited. Food

then was still plentiful in Dallas County, and there was no dearth of alcoholic refreshments. The day ended in a banquet, at which the usual martial speeches were delivered. Curses were heaped on the hated Yankees, and everyone present swore that he would sacrifice his last dollar to see them wiped out. Lincoln in particular came in for a lusty drubbing; nothing was too bad for that joke-telling White House baboon, who had brought so much misery to the people of the South. Gayle had heard all these speeches before and knew them for what they were worth. Most of these loud-mouthed, self-styled patriots were either profiteers or speculators, and in their hearts none of them was anxious to see the war ended. As to Lincoln, they probably blessed him in the privacy of their homes, not because they loved him, but because he had lifted them from poverty to riches. Gayle could stand just so much of this hollow oratory. When he had enough of it, he rose to propose a toast of his own. He called it "Death to the Tyrants." (Applause.)

"Gentlemen," he began, "I have heard a great deal about your desire to do away with that monster Lincoln. If you really want to be rid of him, I have a plan which will accomplish it." (Long applause.) "I heard you say that you are willing to sacrifice your money toward that end. I agree with you. If you will adopt my plan, I promise you that Lincoln and his cohorts will cease to exist by March 1 of next year." (Thunderous applause.)

Here Mr. Gayle paused and looked at his audience. What he saw was flushed faces, shining eyes and the satisfied mien of men who had dined well.

"If you are with me, gentlemen," he continued, "provide me with a million dollars. In four months from now the names of Abraham Lincoln, of his Secretary of State William Seward and of his Vice-President Andrew Johnson will be engraved on tombstones."

There was no applause now. The diners had sobered down. This was going farther than they had expected. Besides, a million dollars was a lot of money, even in depreciated Confederate currency. Gayle sensed that the men around the large table were drawing away from him.

"All I need to begin with," he quickly continued, "is fifty thousand dollars. The rest need not be paid, if I fail in my promise. I will be the first to sign one thousand dollars."

The audience swayed back. They noted that Mr. Gayle was coming down to earth. The men swarmed around him, slapping his back and shaking his hands. That was the kind of talk to give, not the ordinary wishwash the politicians dished out day by day. The next morning they all would pay in their share at the local bank. Fifty thousand dollars—if the death of a tyrant was not worth that much, it was worth nothing.

Mr. Gayle spent the next day at the bank. None of last night's company showed up. Not a dollar of the promised money was paid in. The people of Selma who had been told the story smiled knowingly. Old Gayle occasionally enjoyed his little joke. So far as the thousand dollars he himself had pledged, it was common knowledge that he could not have raised one-tenth of that amount.

The elderly lawyer was not greatly surprised. He had not expected compliance with last night's promises, especially as, under the conditions, some of his listeners undoubtedly had forgotten much of what had happened. He waited another day, and still another. Then he took action to force a showdown. Off he went to the office of the *Selma Dispatch* and wrote out his advertisement. It was to be inserted several times in succession.

That much done, Gayle sat back and waited. Again nothing happened. No crowd milled in front of the receiving teller's window at the bank. Those readers of the *Selma Dispatch* who had not yet been informed of what had occurred at the banquet evi-

dently did not take much interest in the life or death of the three Washington dignitaries.

But what if they had? Suppose fifty thousand dollars had been paid in. Fifty thousand dollars was not a large amount of money in the Confederate currency of late 1864, and certainly within easy reach of a community enriched by war profits. A committee would probably have been appointed to carry out Mr. Gayle's plan. His hand would have been forced and, once started, the plot, even though conceived to express scorn, and for no other purpose, might have got out of hand and ended in bitter earnest. One firebrand could have started a stampede toward murder. After three and a half years of war, violent death had lost much of its terror, and a few Southerners were undoubtedly willing to murder Lincoln; many more would have seen it done without regret. There was another danger. Just then news of the burning of Atlanta and of Sherman's devastating march through Georgia filled the papers, inflaming the minds to a new high mark in passion. Perhaps the people of Selma also felt that they, living in an arsenal city like Atlanta, would soon feel the heavy hand of the conqueror. All in all, assassins could probably have been hired with ease, and once hired they could have performed their task only too well. To kill the fatalistic Lincoln, who liked to take lonely walks in the dark and who eluded his bodyguards whenever he could, would not have been difficult.

Lincoln's death on April 14, 1865, turned Gayle's joke into stark tragedy. Secretary of War Stanton and the radicals in Congress were looking everywhere for evidence to connect the South with the murder plot, but without much success. They had made loud and confident accusations, but had unearthed no proof. Then someone directed their attention to the murder advertisement in the *Selma Dispatch* and to its unknown author. Who owned Box X

in Cahaba? Here was grist for the Washington revenge mill to grind out hatred and suspicion, so as to prevent Southern representation, which would have broken the Radicals' hold on the nation's throat—and pocketbook. Whoever had inserted the notice in the Selma paper was in for a bad time.

A full-fledged general, J. M. McArthur, with an escort of military police, was sent out to find the culprit. This proved an unexpectedly simple task. The owner of the *Dispatch* had fled, but two of his printers, John Cantlin and Watson D. Graves, were found and questioned. Under pressure they remembered the ad and, what was more to the point, its sponsor. Gayle's arrest was accomplished in a matter of hours. Amidst the wails of his wife and daughters he was taken into custody and thrown into the Selma jail, to be kept there subject to orders from Washington. For good luck the soldiers also arrested Andrew R. Moore, a former governor of Alabama, who happened to be around.

It was now the end of May and the trial of the alleged conspirators against Lincoln's life was in full sway. So far the efforts of the War Department to demonstrate that the murder plot was of Southern origin had miscarried. In spite of much perjured testimony, Jefferson Davis' name had remained unsullied. But Mr. Gayle's capture had opened up new possibilities, and orders were issued to hurry the prisoner to the nation's capital with all possible speed. Ways and means would be found to make him talk.

As it turned out, however, Mr. Gayle was not destined to see the inside of a Washington cell. When the *Constitution*, the boat on which he was an unwilling passenger, arrived in New York, Stanton ordered him held in Fort Lafayette. Perhaps the trial was too far advanced to put Mr. Gayle on the list of defendants. Perhaps there was another reason. Gayle was an experienced lawyer who, frightened and bewildered though he was, had shown plenty of pluck on his long voyage. To accuse a man of his type without

sufficient evidence was fraught with danger and constituted a hazard which the War Department could not afford to take. At any rate, a new surprise move followed. Before Gayle could be lodged in Fort Lafayette, Stanton's order was rescinded by President Johnson personally, who directed that the prisoner be taken to Fort Pulaski, near Savannah, a port where the boat had stopped only a few days previously, to drop Governor Moore. Obviously the President and his Secretary of War were anxious to remove Gayle from the jurisdiction of Northern courts. Strong arguments had been raised against the constitutionality of the military tribunal then sitting in a city where the civil courts were functioning unmolested. No good purpose would be served in running counter to public opinion by starting another case under identical conditions. The South was still under undisputed military rule, and Fort Pulaski would be a safe place in which to try Gayle without the interference of pestiferous meddlers, who preached that even the murder of a President did not nullify the Bill of Rights.

Gayle was speedily indicted on two counts: for conspiracy to murder the President of the United States and for giving aid to the late rebellion. Against the conspiracy charge he could have defended himself successfully. He probably had never heard of Booth and his band, and probably none of them had ever heard of either Gayle or Cahaba. On the second charge he had too much company to be greatly concerned. Nevertheless, a military court would be likely to execute him on the evidence of his advertisement alone or, if the recent precedent of the conspiracy trial counted for anything, on no evidence at all.

After the hanging of four conspirators, however, the hysteria brought about by Lincoln's assassination was rapidly abating. Civilian prisoners became a source of embarrassment to the government. Pardons were granted liberally. Under the influence of

enlightened public opinion, Mr. Gayle would have been freed at once had he been indicted for no worse crime than being a Confederate. But the conspiracy charge could not be disposed of so easily, probably much to the regret of the War Department; for the prisoner had become a white elephant on its hands.

A year and a half passed, and Gayle was still lingering in prison. Then, at last, a way was found to let him go. He was given his release, but the indictments against him were not quashed and the possibility of a later trial still hung over him.

The aged lawyer returned home, only to find that his beloved Cahaba was about to lose what little was left of its former grandeur. A new flood had come and gone, but this time it had wrought more than physical damage. Cahaba had been forced to yield the seat of Dallas County to Selma. This time it was really the end. All but a handful of citizens, too poor or too indifferent to move, left in 1866. To Mr. Gayle it no longer mattered where he lived. His remaining years he would devote to freeing himself from an indictment which, if not lifted, would fasten on him forever the evil repute of a would-be assassin.

After his release, Mr. Gayle at once filed a petition for pardon. The document was addressed to President Andrew Johnson, one of the very men he had once volunteered to remove by assassination.

The petition was duly received, but Washington remained silent, and Gayle busied himself lining up support for his plea. Curiously, the first willing to lend a helping hand were former United States Army officers stationed at or near Selma; the group was headed by none other than the same General McArthur, who had arrested him two years before.

The Masons of the state were next to bestir themselves in Mr. Gayle's behalf. Once more, for the last time, the Cahaba lodge

met at the beautiful temple in the old town, in order to intervene with the President for their brother in distress. Their petition was forwarded to the White House in January 1867, and a few days later another followed, signed by the governor of Alabama, by the President of the State Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Twenty-five senators and sixty-eight representatives also attached their signatures. It was quite an impressive document.

The members of the Alabama bar, headed by the judges of the State Supreme Court, likewise swung into line. They had known Mr. Gayle intimately and did not hesitate to endorse his plea for complete freedom.

Still the silence in Washington remained unbroken. Then Mrs. Gayle bethought herself of a distant relative in Nashville, who was a friend of the President. From him she obtained a letter of introduction to the White House, wherein it was stated that Mr. Gayle was an inveterate joker and incapable of bearing malice toward anyone.

This epistle, too, remained unanswered.

Mr. and Mrs. Gayle now felt that action by the President might be obtained by a personal visit. The early days of March 1867 found them in Washington. Mr. Gayle's attempt to see the President was unsuccessful, but Mrs. Gayle did gain admittance to Henry Stanbery, the Attorney General, who assured her that a final decision would reach her while she was still at the capital. Nevertheless the promised decision failed to come forth.

After a fruitless wait of several weeks the Gayles returned to Cahaba. They would have felt happier had they known that the Attorney General, although refusing to be hurried, was convinced that Gayle was a harmless old man. The President expressed himself as in agreement with this view. "Mr. Johnson," Stanbery testified subsequently, "seemed to look upon it as nothing but a squib."

And so, on April 27, 1867, George W. Gayle at last received his full pardon. He and his family continued to make their home in Cahaba, which by then had become a ghost town. Broken in health, Mr. Gayle still tried to practice law but, lacking clients, devoted most of his time to farming. For seven more years the Gayles kept up the struggle, then gave up. Their beautiful home with its large porches was dismantled and moved to Selma. But Mr. Gayle could not adjust himself to the changed conditions. He died a short time later, poor, sick, but once more a free and respected citizen.

A few old people in Selma—very few now—still recollect the strange incident of the murder ad, but they prefer not to talk about it. Perhaps they are right. Gayle's indiscretion was buried with his body, and if it is remembered at all, it is remembered only as one of the strange outcroppings of wartime hysteria.

It was Gayle's good luck that his plan had been addressed to an indifferent audience; for, had there been some hotheads among them, it might be his name, not that of John Wilkes Booth, which History would remember as that of the most notorious and most despised murderer of the nineteenth century.

1865

In which a pleasant interlude leads to catastrophe

IF A CONFEDERATE officer had not been a lucky fisherman, the name of Appomattox Court House would not have become synonymous with Lee's surrender and the end of the Civil War.

When Thomas Lafayette Rosser was only twenty-eight years old, he had already been a major general in the Confederate Army for over half a year. Six foot two inches tall, he presented an imposing figure which, however, stood in sharp contrast to his exuberant spirit and the slow Texas drawl he had acquired in his boyhood days. J. E. B. Stuart, in an official report, once had called him a "bold cavalier." No one who fought under the Stars and Bars could wish for a more enviable tribute than that.

The last days of March 1865 had come, and the Confederacy was in its death throes. Lee's army was crumbling, but Rosser's youthful enthusiasm kept him from giving up hope. As he inspected the dwindling force which he had just brought from the Shenandoah Valley to the environs of Petersburg, he had a cheerful word for everyone. The next few days would bring hard fighting, but he was full of confidence. Had he been able to read the future, he would have been astounded to learn that of all Southern generals he was going to be the only one to cut his way through Grant's army at Appomattox Court House. He would have been still more astounded to know that thirty-odd years hence he would command a brigade of Northern volunteers in the Spanish-American War.



FIVE FORKS, VIRGINIA

Rosser's division, shrunk to twelve hundred men and greatly fatigued after the heavy fighting it had undergone, was resting at Stony Creek, southwest of Petersburg, when it was again ordered to the front. The iron ring which Grant had forged around Richmond and Petersburg was drawing closer and now threatened to crush the two remaining railroads over which flowed the sustenance of the army and the civilian population. How to prevent this calamity in face of an overwhelming enemy superiority, numerical and material, was a problem to which the Confederate leaders had vainly tried to find a solution.

Lee's position had indeed become desperate. So far he had met each new enemy front with one of his own, but now his lines were stretched to the breaking point. In some spots the trenches were manned by scarcely more than pickets. Grant kept harassing the defenders by constant thrusts, lest Lee pull out his troops surreptitiously some night and join General Joseph E. Johnston, who commanded the only other Eastern Confederate army still in the field. Johnston was somewhere in North Carolina, and if the two leaders combined their forces, the war would go on. So far Grant had not been able to force the issue for lack of sufficient cavalry, but Philip H. Sheridan had recently arrived from the Shenandoah Valley and filled this want. Something was bound to happen soon.

Lee saw the picture clearly. He reasoned correctly that the Union armies would push westward to break the vital Southside Railroad. If that went, Petersburg and Richmond would go too. There would be left then only the railroad to Danville, over which the government and the troops must be evacuated if they were to avoid capture or starvation. To avert this danger, Lee scraped together his last reserves. Rosser was ordered to report to General George Pickett, of Gettysburg fame, who was to ward off the expected blow. Together with six thousand men on foot and Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry, the total number of this detached force was

swelled to ten thousand, about one-quarter of Lee's entire army. The decision to deplete the trenches by so many men was a desperate gamble. It meant that the Confederates must leave their fortifications and fight in the open, where the losses on both sides would be more equal; but there was nothing else Lee could do. If Pickett could not halt the Federal advance, all was lost. The prayers of millions were with him.

Rosser immediately set his troops in motion. He had been instructed to join Pickett at Five Forks, an important crossroad a few miles north of Dinwiddie Court House, between that settlement and the Southside Railroad. Since the distance he had to traverse was short, he did not hurry. On the way he had to cross the Notoway River, and it occurred to him that he might take a few hours off and go fishing. Should he be lucky it would help conserve his meager supply of provisions; if not, he would at least spend a peaceful afternoon. Accordingly, he borrowed a seine from a neighboring farmer and set out on his foraging expedition.

The success of his short excursion surpassed all his expectations. The shad he caught were more than could be consumed before they would spoil. He and his officers feasted for a day, and what was left of the fish Rosser loaded into an ambulance. Tomorrow was another day and would bring with it renewed appetites which had to be satisfied.

When Rosser reported to Pickett he was ordered to the rear. There, two miles north of Five Forks and behind a small stream called Hatcher's Run, he was to guard the train and act as a general reserve.

Lee's uncanny ability to read Grant's mind, so successfully displayed in the campaign of the Wilderness, again proved itself. As Lee had anticipated, Sheridan began his march toward Dinwiddie Court House, expecting to overlap and turn the Southern defense line at Petersburg. From Dinwiddie Court House Sheridan struck

northward, to gain the Southside Railroad. Up to then he had advanced unhindered, but now he found Pickett across his path, offering not passive but active opposition. Lee, always anxious to keep the initiative, had directed Pickett to take the offensive so as to disrupt the Federal plan. On March 30 the two forces met and Sheridan was thrown back. The victors then lay down at Five Forks for a much-needed night's rest.

The next morning, March 31, General Lee in person watched the onset of his left wing and was satisfied with its early progress. He then left for his headquarters. The troops, however, could not retain their forward position. By sundown the left wing had been pushed back again to the vicinity of its starting point. The right wing under Pickett and Fitzhugh Lee had fared no better. It had come to within a few hundred yards of Dinwiddie Court House, then also had been forced to withdraw in the face of vastly superior forces and the concentrated fire of repeating rifles. When Lee was advised of the day's events, he expressed keen disappointment, something he rarely did, but ordered Pickett to "hold Five Forks at all hazards." The fate of Richmond depended on it, for the crossroads protected the White Oak Road and the Southside Railroad. The White Oak Road was the main artery between Five Forks and Petersburg; the Southside Railroad led to Danville, to General Johnston—and to food.

Rosser had not been engaged in the day's fighting. Mindful of his fish supply, he invited Pickett, upon the latter's return in the evening, to join him next day in a shad bake at his camp. Fitzhugh Lee, second in command, was included in the invitation. Pickett's mouth watered, but he hesitated. His position at Five Forks offered no natural advantages, as it lay in a flat, heavily wooded country and had been strengthened only perfunctorily by hastily erected breastworks. Ordinarily the situation would have called for special precautions, but the comparative ease with which Pickett



LEE'S RETREAT FROM PETERSBURG

had repulsed Sheridan made him overconfident. In view of his success on the day before, he did not expect to be molested for some time. Perhaps he also did some wishful thinking. At any rate, the prospect of a shad bake was too tempting to be resisted. It would be a pleasant interlude in this eternal business of killing or being killed.

The next morning Pickett sent part of his cavalry out toward Dinwiddie Court House. They found everything quiet. Unfortunately they did not extend their scouting to the White Oak Road on the left of their position. If they had, the day might have ended differently.

It was about one o'clock in the afternoon when Pickett and Fitzhugh Lee left Five Forks for the shad bake. Just as they were about to start out, Brigadier General Thomas T. Munford, Fitzhugh Lee's chief lieutenant, was told of a stir among the pickets to the east, on or near the White Oak Road, and so informed his commander. Fitzhugh, impatient to be off, took the matter lightly and ordered Munford to take proper measures if it meant anything more than a slight brush, which he thought unlikely. Together with Pickett he then rode to Rosser's headquarters where the promised meal awaited them.

Hardly had the two generals left when Munford discovered that what was happening to his left was more than a mere brush. His pickets were being driven in, and the White Oak Road was already swarming with Federal cavalry. Heavy groups of infantry were massing in its rear. This road had to be kept clear at all cost, or Pickett's ten thousand men would be cut off from the rest of Lee's army. The Southside Railroad, for the defense of which Lee had detached such a large body of valuable troops, would be periled.

The real cause of the disturbance had been successfully hidden from Munford's outposts. The entire Union 5th Corps, under General G. K. Warren, had arrived overnight and was stealthily exe-

cuting a wide encircling movement, so wide that it was safe from enemy observation. Yet Munford began to suspect what was going on and knew that something had to be done. Five Forks could not be defended easily, and a retreat at least beyond Hatcher's Run seemed imperative, so as to re-establish contact with Lee. Munford, however, did not dare run counter to Lee's explicit order that Five Forks had to be held at all hazards. Frantically he sent messengers in all directions, trying to locate his commanding officers, who had not advised him of their destination. One of the horsemen finally discovered the generals at Rosser's camp. The three officers were calmly munching shad and made light of Munford's fears. Everything was quiet; they had heard no firing; Munford was too excitable. They refused to interrupt their meal. According to testimony given by one of them at a later hearing, they did not believe that "the enemy was in much of a hurry to find us at Five Forks."

They did not know Sheridan; that dynamic little man always was in much of a hurry. If he had not attacked sooner, it was due to the slowness with which the 5th Army Corps had to work its way through a section of the country in which, as General Horace Porter phrased it, the dust in summer was so thick that an army could not see where it moved, and the mud in winter so deep that it could not move at all. This being spring, there was no dust, but plenty of mud. The army could move, but not much more than that.

Sheridan had conceived an excellent battle plan. Warren's infantry was to occupy White Oak Road quietly, far east of the cross-roads and the enemy pickets. A sudden mass attack was then to be launched on the Confederate left flank and rear. Sheridan's dismounted cavalrymen meanwhile were to creep up in front and coordinate their assault with that of their comrades. When Sheridan found the infantry slowed up by the marshy ground, worsened by recent rains, he fumed and fretted, taking Warren to task for his

tardiness and accusing him of apathy. Before the day was over, he would replace him with General Charles Griffin. The redoubtable Warren, whose quick thinking had saved Little Round Top, and with it the second day at Gettysburg, was fated to wait fourteen years before a court of inquiry would hear his side of the story.

At four o'clock every regiment was in position, and the assault hit Pickett's flank like an avalanche. Bursting forth from the woods on both sides of the White Oak Road, the Union phalanx hurled itself on the leaderless Confederates. Accompanying the infantry was a band on horseback which played "Nelly Bly" as gaily as at a county fair. This was one of Sheridan's favorite devices to foster the spirit of his troops. Munford's protecting cavalry screen was easily dispersed, but Warren's men found brave resistance where the trenches curved back at an angle to guard the left flank. The defenders were making a mighty good fight of it, when a new attack from another side hit them. The dismounted cavalry had silently approached and was now trying to get a foothold at their front. The gray line had to face two ways, but even that did not dishearten them. They were hardened veterans, and used to fighting against top-heavy odds. In the meantime, however, Federal forces had penetrated to their rear, too. How many more Yanks would they have to take on? Still they battled on valiantly, their backs to one another, and with the courage of desperation. But the weight of numbers told. The combined Union cavalry and infantry were beginning to climb over the ramparts. Guns gave way to bayonets, rocks and fists. Sheridan himself appeared in the front line. Putting the spurs to his famous black horse Rienzi he jumped over the breastwork into the midst of the melee. Surrounded on three sides, the defenders of the angle surrendered. With its left flank crushed, the entire Confederate line became untenable and was rolled up like a scroll. Resistance ceased shortly; in less than an hour three to four thousand prisoners were marched off to Din-

widdie Court House. The number was to grow to five thousand before the day was over. The extreme right of the line still held; but it was only a question of minutes before it, too, dissolved.

The heavy firing which, without preliminaries, had begun at 4:00 P.M., acted on the three picnicking generals at Rosser's camp like an electric shock. They suddenly realized how timely Munford's warning had been, and that by ignoring it they had blundered disastrously. The horror of their guilt must have struck them like a physical blow. Two miles away their troops had been surrounded, while they were feasting. Pickett was the first to recover. Throwing himself flat on his horse, he plunged across the bridge over Hatcher's Run and rode the long gantlet of a furious fusilade by Union troops, but none of the shots found its mark. The remnants of his broken forces rallied around him, and he led them in flight. Fitzhugh Lee and Rosser were completely cut off and only managed to mingle with the few fugitives who streamed confusedly across Hatcher's Run. On the banks of the little river Rosser's reserve cavalry stood guard, successfully disputing further pursuit.

Pickett's defeat was a disaster as unexpected as it was irreparable. In an hour's time Lee had lost his last reserves and his hope of keeping Grant out of Richmond.

It is improbable that the mere presence of Pickett and Fitzhugh Lee—Rosser was at his headquarters, where he should have been—could have staved off the debacle. The Confederates fought well enough even in the absence of their leaders. Against the overwhelming odds with which they were confronted, military leadership, even of the highest type, would not have availed. What Pickett and Fitzhugh might, and undoubtedly would have done, though, was to retreat behind Hatcher's Run regardless of orders as soon as Sheridan's encircling plan became discernible. Both were experienced commanders, and if they had remained where duty had placed them, they would hardly have let themselves be

caught in a trap. Lee had issued his directions under the misapprehension that Sheridan's force could be dealt with by ten thousand men; he certainly would have rescinded his dispositions when advised that Sheridan's cavalry had been strengthened by Warren's infantry corps, although he could not have known that the enemy had at least three times his own number of troops in the field. Even had Pickett shied away from disobeying a specific order, he would have had abundant time to inform the general in chief of the changed conditions, for between Munford's first alarm and the final attack three hours had elapsed. Nor was the heartbreaking loss in men the worst consequence of Pickett's and young Lee's aberration. Still worse was their failure to notify their commander promptly of the catastrophe. By nightfall Lee had received only incomplete reports, one from a fugitive captain, the other from his nephew Fitzhugh. Both led him to believe that Pickett had suffered a slight setback. Pickett himself either could not or dared not communicate with Lee, who did not learn the full truth until the morning of April 2. Then it was brought home to him in a forceful manner.

He was sleeping at his headquarters, the Turnbull House on Edge Hill, about three miles out of Petersburg. General A. P. Hill had come over from his near-by headquarters and was resting on the floor. Longstreet, who had been recalled from the northern defenses, arrived about 4:00 A.M. It was still dark when Colonel Charles S. Venable of Lee's staff happened to stroll out through the gate. A rumbling of wagons driven at breakneck speed reached his ears. A few moments later, frantic teamsters rushed by, whipping up their horses and yelling that the Yankees were right behind them.

Venable immediately rushed into the house to warn Lee, then rode out with A. P. Hill to reconnoiter. Hill was never again seen alive. In the early dawn Venable became terror-stricken

upon discovering that a few huts half a mile away were already in possession of Federal troops. They might have captured Lee and his staff had they been aware of their opportunity.

A short period of quiet was restored at the Turnbull House when it was found that the Federals who had occupied the huts were only vedettes. They soon disappeared, evidently having been recalled. Lee's headquarters, although no longer safe, were kept intact for the time being.

Lee now knew what had happened at Five Forks. Had he known it the night before, he undoubtedly would have ordered the immediate evacuation of Richmond. One day sooner would have made a great deal of difference. A true report of the battle at Five Forks reached him at last around 10:00 o'clock in the forenoon, and then immediate action was inadvisable. A retrograde movement of the whole army in broad daylight would have invited a full-scale attack by Grant, and such an attack could not have been successfully resisted. The delusion that the trenches were fully manned had to be kept until nightfall.

Lee realized that Pickett's defeat meant the end. One gate in his defense wall had been smashed in, five thousand of his best infantry were gone, the bulk of his cavalry had been scattered. He hid his despair behind his usual composure, but it was no secret that, contrary to his noble and generous nature, he could not bring himself to forgive Pickett. It was said that Lee never spoke to him again as long as he lived. Perhaps he might have overlooked Pickett's delinquency, which could be partially repaired by a quick evacuation of Petersburg; but he could not forget the catastrophic consequences which followed in its wake and which he could not have foreseen at the time.

At 10:40 A.M. the Secretary of War at Richmond received this telegram:

Headquarters, via Petersburg,
April 2, 1865.

General J. C. Breckenridge:

I see no prospect of doing more than holding our position here till night. I am not certain that I can do that; if I can, I shall withdraw tonight north of the Appomattox. . . . Our only chance . . . of concentrating our forces is to do so near Danville Railroad, which I shall endeavor to do at once. I advise that all preparations be made for leaving Richmond tonight. I shall arrive later according to circumstances.

R. E. Lee

This dispatch, which was handed to Jefferson Davis in St. Paul's Church, made him prepare for immediate flight.

The night from April 1 to April 2, plus a whole precious day, had been wasted, because Pickett and Fitzhugh Lee had behaved like little boys afraid to confess that they had started a fire, until it was too late to extinguish it.

Soon after the morning dispatch to Richmond had been sent off, the Turnbull House was given up, for it had become the target of Federal artillerists. With it, of course, went the telegraph apparatus by means of which the general in chief had been conversing with the capital. It, too, would have been moved the night before had Lee known the danger in which Sheridan's breakthrough had placed him. The moving of the telegraph did not look important then, but it helped start a sequence of events from which eventually would spring total disaster.

During the night from April 2 to April 3 Lee withdrew, and the race with Grant's pursuing troops began. The goal of both armies was Burkeville, a railroad junction some fifty miles west of Petersburg. If Lee could get there first, he might be able to establish connections with General Johnston in North Carolina;

if Grant won, he would prevent their junction. This time both Lee and Grant could read each other's minds. One look at the map was enough to show each which way his opponent intended to go, and over which roads he would move.

A few miles from Burkeville, in a northeasterly direction and on the Danville Railroad, lay the little settlements of Jetersville and Amelia Court House. It was to Amelia Court House that Lee had ordered supplies sent from Richmond, where three hundred fifty thousand army rations had been stored against an emergency of this kind. These rations would last his army of thirty to thirty-five thousand men a few days; and once back on the railroad, more provisions could easily be procured from interior points.

In his dispatch of April 2, which had been received in Richmond at 10:40 A.M., Lee had announced that he was retreating westward, but had not mentioned the place to which the supplies were to be sent, for at that hour he had not yet prepared his plans in detail. He had not envisioned that, due to Pickett's utter defeat, his retreat would have to be so precipitate. All he could say in his telegram was that he would concentrate near the Danville Railroad. His chief commissary in the capital, General I. M. St. John, was an able officer and immediately wired back for specific instructions. Well did he know the half-starved condition of the Confederate soldiers, to whom food was even more essential than ammunition. St. John's urgent message was not answered, because the headquarters telegraph station was then in the process of being moved. Lee himself, unsolicited, supplied the information as soon as the station had been set up again and he had mapped out his hurried retreat. "The troops will all be directed to Amelia Court House," he telegraphed later in the day. He did not need to say more; St. John could be relied on to read this message right and divert the supplies accordingly. That

done, Lee turned his attention to the thousand and one other matters which required his personal supervision and which presented an almost superhuman task even to his towering genius.

For three days the retreating army stumbled on its way toward Amelia Court House. Thousands of pursuers, well-fed and riding on well-fed horses, were constantly harassing them. Lee's men, down to a few grains of corn per day, dropped out by the hundreds. They saw their exhausted horses fall down in their traces, they saw wagons abandoned, turned over and set on fire to keep them from being captured by the enemy. Throughout the long march the specter of starvation kept in step with them, but always beyond the horizon their lack-luster eyes looked forward to the rations which were awaiting them at Amelia Court House. The very name of the little hamlet became a charm which prompted them on. Amelia Court House!

At last, on the morning of April 4, the advance tottered into the promised land of plenty. They were joyfully greeted: yes, there were all kinds of supplies on hand—ordnance supplies, artillery and infantry caissons, even harnesses. But food? No, nobody had ordered food sent to the village. There was not enough of it around to feed a corporal's guard. Lee's blood turned cold. Someone had again blundered, and this time the blunder could not be retrieved. He had given his orders, and they had not been obeyed. His men, his poor starving men! What could he say to them? Those who saw their beloved leader that day said that he suddenly looked haggard, like a man deprived of all hope.

Although Lee was at a loss to understand why his instructions had not been followed, he took what steps he could to remedy the situation. In a pathetic appeal to the farmers in and around Amelia Court House he stated that he had expected to find provi-

sions, which had been ordered placed there several days before. His words expressed "surprise and regret" that he had found not even a pound of subsistence for man or horse. As usual, he kept his inner feelings to himself, but his thoughts must have burned hotly in bitterness against General Pickett's frivolous pleasure excursion. The hasty evacuation of the Petersburg headquarters had unquestionably been Pickett's fault and had brought about the fatal delay in the telegram mentioning Amelia Court House. Lee did not know then that it was also the cause of St. John's inability to reach him by telegraph. It had been the last chance to rectify the situation. Even downright treason could not have done worse than Pickett's boyish behavior.

Ugly rumors began to make the rounds among the famished troops. Some said that a string of railroad cars, loaded with edibles, had rolled into Amelia Court House from Danville, but had not been unloaded because panic-stricken government officials had ordered them sent to Richmond in order to hasten their own departure and the removal of their personal property. Others had it that Jefferson Davis and his Cabinet, together with other high officials, had requisitioned an empty train which was about to be loaded for Amelia Court House and had instead packed them with archives and bullion, using the rest of the space for themselves and their families. The hungry soldiers, cruelly disappointed by the mirage of a full meal, were ready to believe anything.

The facts belied all these malicious rumors. General St. John, anxious to forward the supplies, had been holding a reserve of boxcars in readiness, but had been unable to establish wire connections during the crucial hours while the Petersburg end of the line was being moved. Lee's telegram with specific instructions, due largely to the existing confusion, had not been received in Richmond until 7:00 P.M. By that time it was too late. The cars

with the Confederate treasury and the highest officials had already left and no other cars were available. St. John, realizing the enormity of the catastrophe which he saw developing, and which he was powerless to stop, took possession of all the horse-drawn vehicles he could lay his hands on, loaded them with food and sent them posthaste after Lee's army. Few of them, if any, reached their destination.

Neither Lee, nor Jefferson Davis, nor the Richmond commissary department could rightfully be blamed for the food crisis at Amelia Court House. If Lee's second wire had arrived—or had been sent off—a few hours earlier (which would have been the case if Lee had known the extent of Pickett's defeat) the supplies would have been given priority over everything else. No one, including President Davis, would have interfered. The success or failure of Lee's retreat had hung on this slender thread.

By superhuman efforts Lee had reached the railroad to Danville one day ahead of Sheridan's cavalry, and hoped that the bulk of Grant's army, at least his infantry, was still far behind. If Lee had been able to feed his men and move on at once, he could have chosen between two courses: either use the Danville Railroad in order to join General Johnston, or keep straight ahead to find refuge in the hilly district around Lynchburg. The Danville route was the more hazardous but promised a more worth-while goal, for the two combined Confederate armies would still present a formidable force which might defeat Sherman; on the other hand, the railroad to Danville might be reached by the pursuers before the whole army had passed. The road to Lynchburg was the safer one, but led nowhere in particular, and would condemn both Lee and Johnston to guerilla warfare. The lack of provisions at Amelia Court House made the choice illusory. It took fully a day for the wagons to gather scanty supplies, barely enough to keep

the men and animals from dying on their feet, but the time lost could not be recovered. When, on the following morning, Lee in person reconnoitered along the road toward Jetersville, the next station on the road to Danville, he found that both Grant and Sheridan had caught up with him. The roads to North Carolina were already blocked. The only direction in which Lee still could hope to escape was west, toward Lynchburg, and even then his chances depended on speed. He knew that the odds were nearly impossible, and that the nearly impossible rarely happened. Four days later, on April 9, came the surrender.

The Army of Northern Virginia, proud and full of fight to the last, had not been conquered by arms, but by hunger. Its final defeat had not taken place on the field, but at the peaceful but foodless hamlet of Amelia Court House.

It cannot be argued that the shad bake near Hatcher's Run influenced the outcome of the war. The Confederacy would have succumbed regardless of Pickett's faulty actions. What the latter did do, however, was to start the chain of events which led to disaster after disaster after the first error had been committed. If Pickett and Fitzhugh Lee had stayed with their troops, instead of partaking of a shad bake, the battle of Five Forks would either not have been fought, or might not have led to annihilation. Petersburg would have held out a little longer. Certainly the telegraph station at Lee's headquarters would have functioned long enough to receive and transmit the vital ration dispatches, thereby assuring supplies for the army at Amelia Court House. Or, if the two defeated generals had told Lee the full truth at once, evacuation could have started twenty-four hours earlier, with equally satisfactory results. Without the day's delay at Amelia Court House, Lee could have marched far beyond Appomattox before being brought to bay, if at all. He had once told Jefferson Davis that with the

advantages which the topography of the terrain offered, he could carry on the war for another twenty years against all the troops the Federal Government could bring to bear on him.

And so, if General Rosser had not been a lucky fisherman, the dramatic ending of the Civil War would have been written differently. On that morning when he put out his seine in the Nottaway River he made Appomattox Court House a certainty.

1865

*In which some trivial incidents pave the way for a
great tragedy*

IF A NEW YORK dressmaker had delivered some stage costumes on time, President Lincoln would not have been assassinated in Ford's Theatre.

Americans acquainted with London, visiting that city in 1851, must have been amazed at the changes which had recently taken place in the British capital. Charles Dickens' none too flattering travel reports had been shelved. The scorn with which the erstwhile colonies across the Atlantic had been regarded for years had given place to adulation. Reports from the California gold fields had proved excellent propaganda literature, and products from the land of riches were on sale everywhere; if they were not imported, they were copied. Colt revolvers and Connecticut baby jumpers adorned the show windows, American peanuts were offered in the streets, whisky sours in bars. For the first time pumpkin pies were served on English tables, and poker took the place of the time-honored whist. American idioms, too, had found their way into British circles, and staid Englishmen could be heard to reckon, guess or calculate. For a while it looked as though the new craze would engulf the English isles in a flood of New World peculiarities and eccentricities.

Among the Londoners who looked at this spectacle with a humorous eye was a young barrister named Tom Taylor, who had been gifted with "a pen dipped in gentle irony," as the current

saying was. Taylor, then in his early thirties, had once been a professor of English, but had found that he preferred writing to teaching or practicing law. A visitor who met him at the time described him as of middle height, lithe, with rugged features, glittering eyes, a pugilistic jaw and a "celestially defiant nose." It was this upturned nose which had kept him from cultivating his early ambition of becoming an actor. Turning his talents into creative work instead, he had already written one play; he was destined to write seventy more before he died. When the mania for everything American was at its height, he relieved his feelings by dashing off a travesty to fit the occasion. He called it a farce comedy and gave it the title *Our American Cousin*. Its characters were caricatures of Englishmen such as never lived, and of one lone American, the like of which the United States had never produced. The lot of them were held together by the thin web of an equally grotesque plot.

The story of the play was simple enough. Asa Trenchard, a young man from Vermont, having inherited four hundred thousand dollars from his uncle, decides to visit England with a view of looking up his British cousins. Unfortunately for him, news of his inheritance has preceded his arrival, and wherever he goes mothers with marriageable daughters are spreading their nets for him and his money. But young Asa has other ideas. With the instinct of a child of Nature, he falls in love with Mary Meredith, the one cousin of his who boasts neither title nor social position. She is a milkmaid, and her virtue is her outstanding attraction. In the course of time—in the second scene of the third act, to be exact—he hints of his love, but she shies away. Her poverty and his riches, she whispers coyly, would not mix. In a touching tête-à-tête, later known as the great Dairy Scene, because it takes place in a stable, he receives permission to smoke a cigar, and lights it with a piece of paper which turns out to be his uncle's

will. It is a beautiful sacrifice, as the audience soon discovers, for that bonfire makes the milkmaid the heir to the Vermont fortune and leaves Asa a poor man. Was true love ever more convincingly demonstrated?

So far the plot contained nothing that could be suspected of harboring a potential danger to anyone in the audience; but the scene which follows, harmless as it reads, was fated to become the background of a great historical tragedy.

One of the scheming mothers, a Mrs. Mountchessington, and her daughter Augusta are waiting for Asa Trenchard as he emerges from the stable. They have spun a plot of their own which, they hope, is about to yield them a rich prize. The action, given in somewhat abbreviated form, develops like this:

MRS. MOUNTCHESSINGTON: This American is rich, and on the whole I think a well-regulated affection ought to incline to Asa Trenchard.

AUGUSTA: Very well, Mamma.

MRS. MOUNTCHESSINGTON: At the same time, you must be cautious, or in grasping at Asa Trenchard you may miss him.

AUGUSTA: Oh, I will take care.

(Enter ASA TRENCHARD)

MRS. MOUNTCHESSINGTON: Ah, Mr. Trenchard, we were just talking of your archery powers.

ASA TRENCHARD: Wal, I guess shooting with bows and arrows is just about like most things in life. All you've got to do is to keep the sun out of your eyes, look straight, pull strong, calculate the distance, and you're sure to hit the mark in most things as well as shooting.

AUGUSTA: But not in England, Mr. Trenchard. There are disinterested hearts that only ask an opportunity of showing how they despise that gold, which others set such store by.

ASA TRENCHARD: Wal, I suppose there are, Miss Gusty.

AUGUSTA: All I crave is affection.

ASA TRENCHARD: Do you, now? I wish I could make sure of that, for I've been cruelly disappointed in that particular.

MRS. MOUNTCHESSINGTON: People sometimes look a great way off, for that which is near at hand. (*Glancing at AUGUSTA and ASA alternatively.*)

ASA TRENCHARD: You don't mean Miss Gusta. (*AUGUSTA casts sheep's eyes at him.*) Now, don't look at me in that way. I can't stand it; if you do, I'll bust.

MRS. MOUNTCHESSINGTON: Oh, if you only knew how refreshing this ingenuousness of yours is to an old woman of the world like me.

ASA TRENCHARD: Wal, then, if a rough spun fellow like me was to come forward as a suitor for your daughter's hand, you wouldn't treat me as some folks do, when they find out I wasn't heir to the fortune.

MRS. MOUNTCHESSINGTON: Not heir to the fortune, Mr. Trenchard?

ASA TRENCHARD: Oh, no.

AUGUSTA: What, no fortune?

ASA TRENCHARD: Nary red, it all comes to their barkin' up the wrong tree about the old man's property.

MRS. MOUNTCHESSINGTON: Which he left to you.

ASA TRENCHARD: Oh, no.

AUGUSTA: Not to you?

ASA TRENCHARD: No, which he meant to leave to me, but he thought better on it, and left it to his granddaughter Miss Mary Meredith.

MRS. MOUNTCHESSINGTON: Miss Mary Meredith! Oh, I'm delighted.

AUGUSTA: Delighted?

ASA TRENCHARD: Yes, you both look tickled to death. Now, some girls, and mothers would go away from a fellow when they found that out, but you don't valley fortune, Miss Gusty?

MRS. MOUNTCHESSINGTON: (*Aside, crosses to AUGUSTA.*) My love, you had better go.

ASA TRENCHARD: You crave affection, you do. Now I've no fortune, but I'm biling over with affection, which I'm ready to pour out all over you like apple sass over roast pork.

MRS. MOUNTCHESSINGTON: Mr. Trenchard, you will please recollect you are addressing my daughter, and in my presence.

ASA TRENCHARD: Yes, I'm offering her my heart and hand just as she wants them, with nothing in 'em.

MRS. MOUNTCHESSINGTON: Augusta dear, to your room.

AUGUSTA: Yes, ma. (*Aside*) The nasty beast. (*Exits.*)

MRS. MOUNTCHESSINGTON: I am aware, Mr. Trenchard, you are not used to the manners of good society, and that alone will excuse the impertinence of which you have been guilty. (*Exits.*)

ASA TRENCHARD: Don't know the manners of good society, eh? Wal, I guess I knew enough to turn you inside out, old gal—you sockdologizing old man-trap . . .

When Mr. Taylor wrote this scene, he could not possibly have known that he was creating a setting for a murder which could not have been more perfect had the murderer himself devised it.

It did not appear, however, that the evil potentialities of the comedy would ever be exploited, for *Our American Cousin* was apparently headed for the literary graveyard. No London producer was willing to buy it, even though the popular American comedian Joshua Silsbee had been designated by the playwright as the star of the comedy. Benjamin Webster, the manager of the Adelphi Theatre, where Silsbee was playing, finally bought the play for the sum of eighty pounds, but on second thought de-

cided not to put it on. Instead he returned it to Mr. Taylor. It looked too much like an insult to the intelligence of an adult audience.

Even years later, when the comedy had achieved wide acclaim and was being performed in London, a man in the orchestra once arose about the middle of the first act, stretched himself, put on his coat and started on his way out. The leading actor, incensed at this disturbance, stepped up to the footlights and said, "I beg your pardon, sir, but there are two more acts to come."

"I know—" the man yawned—"that's why I am leaving."

By and by Taylor himself became convinced that *Our American Cousin* was a failure, and so, with a noble gesture, he made a present of it to Mr. Silsbee, who went with it to America. He died there in 1855, without having produced the play. It was said that once he had got as far as the rehearsal stage but had not let it go farther. What he had done with the manuscript, no one knew or cared. Taylor's ill-born brain child was about to die.

Authors, however, are fond of their offspring and do not easily give up. When Mr. Taylor heard about Silsbee's death, he rummaged through his desk and unearthed another copy of the farce. After inserting a few changes, he entrusted it to an American friend, who took it with him to New York. American producers, as might have been expected, displayed no more enthusiasm for the silly plot than had their English confreres, and *Our American Cousin* seemed doomed to final oblivion. The latent murder setting would, after all, never be put to its deathly use. Then, by a queer combination of circumstances, the half-buried play suddenly was given a new lease on life.

Among the theatrical personages of that period, one of the most colorful was Miss Laura Keane, an actress of renown, who managed her own theater in New York. It stood on Broadway, between Bleecker and Houston streets. A trifle over thirty years

old and happily married, Miss Keene was of more than medium height, had a finely proportioned figure and was considered beautiful. Her greatest attraction was her luxuriant chestnut-brown hair, which she was fond of wearing down over her shoulders. Fiery and temperamental, but also capable and shrewd, she had decided to fill the season of 1858 with a series of Shakespearean plays, beginning with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. That decision, harmless in itself, was to become the next link in the tragedy which was in the making.

The premiere of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was set for October 18, but a few days prior to that day the dressmaker gave notice that he would not be ready to deliver the costumes on time. Miss Keene frantically looked around for a stopgap. In her distress she bethought herself of *Our American Cousin*, which she once had read and rejected; but she remembered that it could be put on without undue preparations, and as it would not last long anyway, she bought the manuscript for one thousand dollars in cash.

The play got off to a bad start. When the lines were read to the cast in the greenroom of the theater, there was a near revolt. A young man named E. A. Sothern, to whom had been assigned the role of Lord Dundreary, as ridiculous a figure as ever emanated from the imagination of a playwright, listened to the inane babblings he was expected to utter and mumbled profanities. Joseph Jefferson, another young member of the cast, silently wept into his handkerchief as he saw himself depict the uncouth Asa Trenchard, who talked and acted like an inebriate idiot. Little did the two young actors know that their parts would open to them the gates of such fame as rarely falls to the lot of men.

After a few hasty rehearsals, *Our American Cousin* had its world premiere on the day set, October 18. Miss Keene's husband, who acted as her publicity agent, evidently had done his work well,

for the critic of the *New York Herald* mentioned that the play "had been written especially for this theatre." He praised Joe Jefferson, and predicted that "the piece would probably have a good run." Aside from that he was not overenthusiastic. The *New York Times* also had been convinced that "the work had been prepared for the American market," called it genial and homely, rather than epigrammatic and brilliant, and then added: "The audience was thoroughly satisfied and expressed its satisfaction with unequivocal mirth!"

The critics had underestimated the attractiveness of the play which, as if in mockery of the theatrical producers, who had rejected it so cavalierly, proved one of the greatest box-office attractions of the century. With Shakespeare all but forgotten for the time being, it ran at Miss Keene's theater without interruption until the end of March 1859, and then was taken off only, according to Broadway gossip, because both Jefferson and Sothorn had begun to outshine the star, who unfortunately also was their employer. Miss Keene could by that time well afford to be temperamental, for after three months of *Our American Cousin*, she was, so Joseph Jefferson tells us, "ablaze with diamonds." One attendant, who had business in her dressing room, once saw her throw goldfish around, and an actor, whom she had summoned on account of an error he had committed, turned off the gas because, he declared diplomatically, he could not see rage disfigure such a beautiful woman. It all made good copy for the press, and everybody was happy.

What it was that had put the show over the experts were not able to explain, but since they had to say something, they decided that it was the Dairy Scene, which apparently touched a sympathetic cord in the audience. Whatever it was, the fact remained that the comedy ran on for year after year without losing its popularity. Theatrical companies all over pirated the lines, and the court calendars were crammed with damage suits; but somehow

the shows went on. Joe Jefferson bought Miss Keene's rights for Australia and played there with great success. Mr. Sothern tried his luck with it in England, where the outcome hung in the balance until one evening a woman was trampled to death in front of the ticket office. People at once clamored for tickets and the play went over triumphantly. Later it was said that the management that night had been issuing passes in a last effort to fill the house.

In 1860, when *Our American Cousin* was being performed in Chicago's McVickers Theatre during the days of the Republican convention, Lincoln probably had seen it there. Few adults of the early sixties had not seen it at one place or another.

Jefferson was then no longer in the cast, but by a strange interweaving of fates, he had once before in his theatrical career crossed Lincoln's path. In 1839 his father's company, with which he was traveling, had built for itself a theater in Springfield, Illinois, because no playhouse was available in the pioneer town. But when the building was finished, it could not be used, because due to a religious revival then in progress the city had imposed a prohibitive license fee on the "unholy" enterprise.

In the midst of his predicament the manager of the show received a call from a young local lawyer named Abraham Lincoln, who offered to help the stranded company. His offer was gratefully accepted, whereupon he pleaded the case of the Thespians before the town council with much skill and humor. As a result the license fee was revoked, and the new state capital enjoyed its first playing season. Jefferson probably drew somewhat on his imagination in recalling this incident, but that is the way he recorded it many years later.

In 1865 *Our American Cousin*, defying all precedents, was still going strong, although it had undergone many changes, thanks to interpolations and quips which had been added from time to time. On April 14 it was to be presented at Ford's Theatre in Wash-

ington, as a benefit performance for Miss Keene, who had played one of the English cousins a thousand times. She still chose the part as promising a rich harvest, although April 14 that year fell on Good Friday, one of the worst theatrical nights from a box-office point of view.

In the White House that day sat a tired President who had aged perceptibly during the four years of his incumbency. Now perhaps his worries would lighten. Lee had surrendered less than a week before, and for all practical purposes the war was over. Nevertheless, Lincoln was not in a festive mood and had no inclination to visit a theater, for his son Robert had just returned from the front, and the President was looking forward to a long, cozy family chat. But Grant also had arrived at Washington, and Mrs. Lincoln had arranged a box party for the victorious general. Streamers announced his expected presence at the theater, special notices, cleverly placed, proclaimed it in the afternoon papers. Yet, an hour and a half before the curtain was to rise, General and Mrs. Grant left for Philadelphia, offering a trivial excuse for their departure. Another fatal *If*, for, had Grant been in the Presidential party, a military guard would have been provided who would have stopped strangers from entering the box. With the Grants gone, there was nothing for Mrs. Lincoln to do but make up the party with other guests. The President thought it his duty not to disappoint the audience which had bought out the house to see the illustrious visitors. He would have given much to stay at home.

That forenoon John Wilkes Booth, a stage idol of his day, who usually spent his spare time at Ford's Theatre, heard a messenger from the White House order tickets for boxes seven and eight, the proscenium loges on the right side of the stage as seen from the audience. He listened avidly. For several months he had plotted

to kidnap Lincoln and exchange him for Confederate war prisoners so as to fill the depleted ranks of the Southern armies. His plot had failed, and after Lee's surrender, it became purposeless. Baffled and enraged, Booth turned the kidnapping plot into one of murder.

When the young tragedian heard that Lincoln was to attend the performance of *Our American Cousin* that night, it impressed him as an open invitation to execute his plan. Like all actors of the sixties, he knew every line of the play by heart and was cognizant of the rare opportunity which was offered him by the setting of the last act. He would take advantage of it.

Following the departure of Mrs. Mountchessington there remained no one on the stage but Asa Trenchard. One man! Booth, an accomplished athlete, could handle him easily. Another lucky thing—Asa's back would be turned toward the Presidential box. The young actor could not help wondering about how well things were fitting into his scheme. Suppose the stage manager had ordered the two women to make their exit through the opposite wings—what a difference that would have made! With Asa looking toward Lincoln's loge, he might notice Booth's entry and give the alarm before escape was possible, for the only door out of the box led through the balcony, which was crowded with spectators, many of them army officers. One more little *If* which might have protected the wartime President. So far as the action of the play was concerned, the two actresses could as well have left on one side as on the other.

Booth's plan, from its inception, had rested on two fundamental premises: one was that whatever he would do to Lincoln was to be done in a theater, the other that his own escape had to be reasonably certain. Sheer vanity accounted for the first premise. No one had ever had the audacity to assassinate a ruler in a theater. During the past months, when he had been nursing his plot to

kidnap the President, the capture also was to have been effected inside a playhouse. One of the reasons the plot had miscarried was that the other conspirators were less romantically inclined and had refused to fall in with their leader's ideas.

The second premise, the wish to escape alive, was equally important to Booth. He was no blind fanatic, willing to sacrifice his life for an ideal. He was an actor, to whom applause was the very essence of existence. A dead man could not make bows to cheering audiences. Of all the plays then being given, none fitted his purposes except *Our American Cousin*. That it should be performed on an evening when Lincoln would be present seemed almost providential. It was tonight or never. It would be tonight.

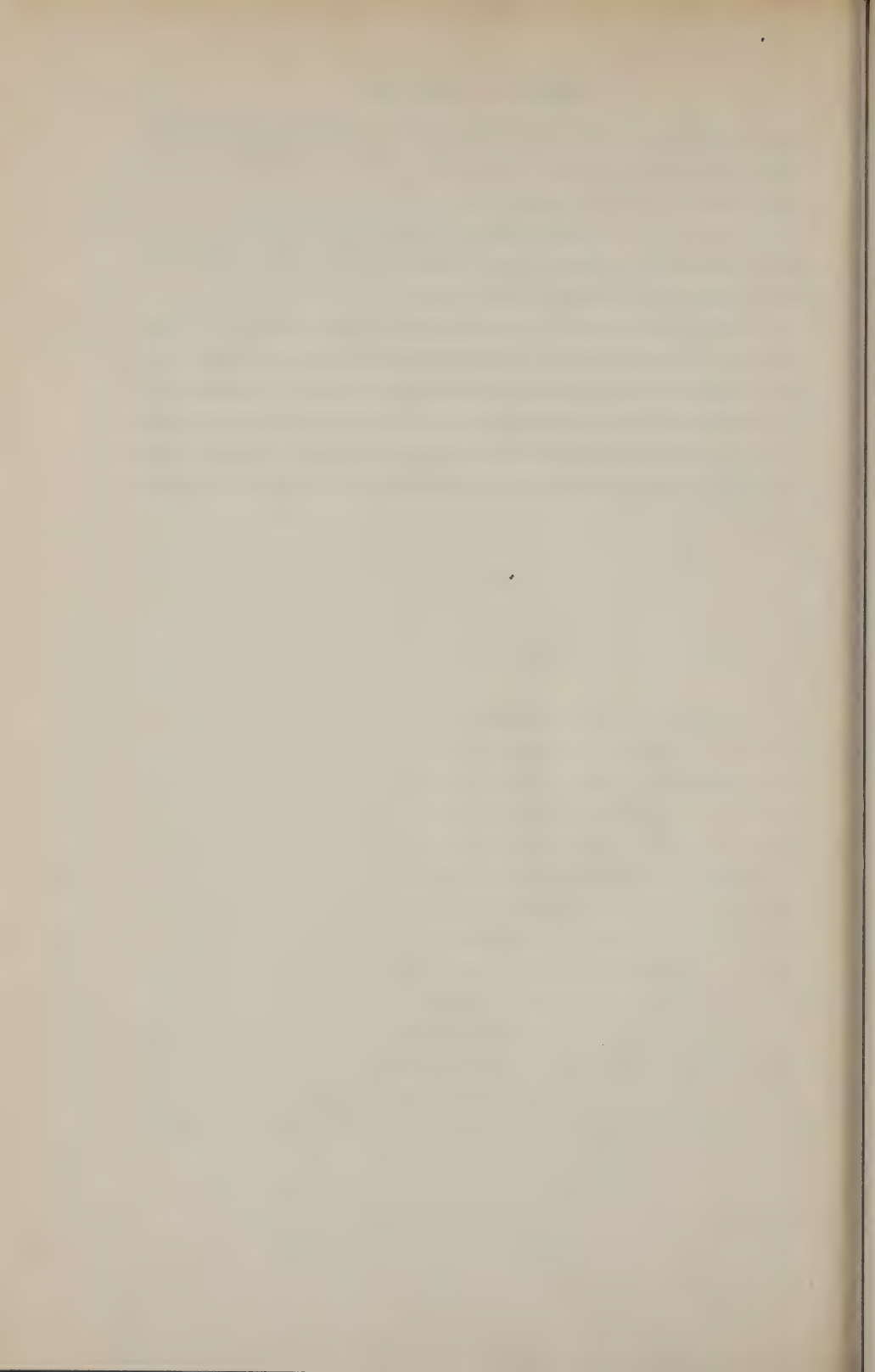
Only one obstacle remained. Laura Keene, with an actor playing the part of Lieutenant Vernon of the Royal Navy, would be standing in the wings, ready to make their entrance, while the fatal scene of the farce was being enacted. That pair had to be passed without their giving the alarm. Well, Booth would give them no time to grasp the situation.

Just then Booth heard another piece of news which made him smile happily. The actor who was to play the role of the navy officer had reported sick. His part being small, Miss Keene had sent for William Ferguson, an usher boy, who was to speak the few words. Fate surely was on the assassin's side. He could already see, in his mind's eye, Laura Keene in the wings, going through a last-minute rehearsal with the young usher, oblivious of what was going on in Lincoln's box or elsewhere. The chances that she would look up were negligible; those that she and Ferguson could stop him, nil. All Booth had to do was to creep into the box and keep himself hidden until his cue came, the cue being the laughter which always followed Asa's parting words to Mrs. Mountchesington, "you sockdologizing old man-trap." The applause would drown the noise of his shot. Then a quick jump to the stage, a

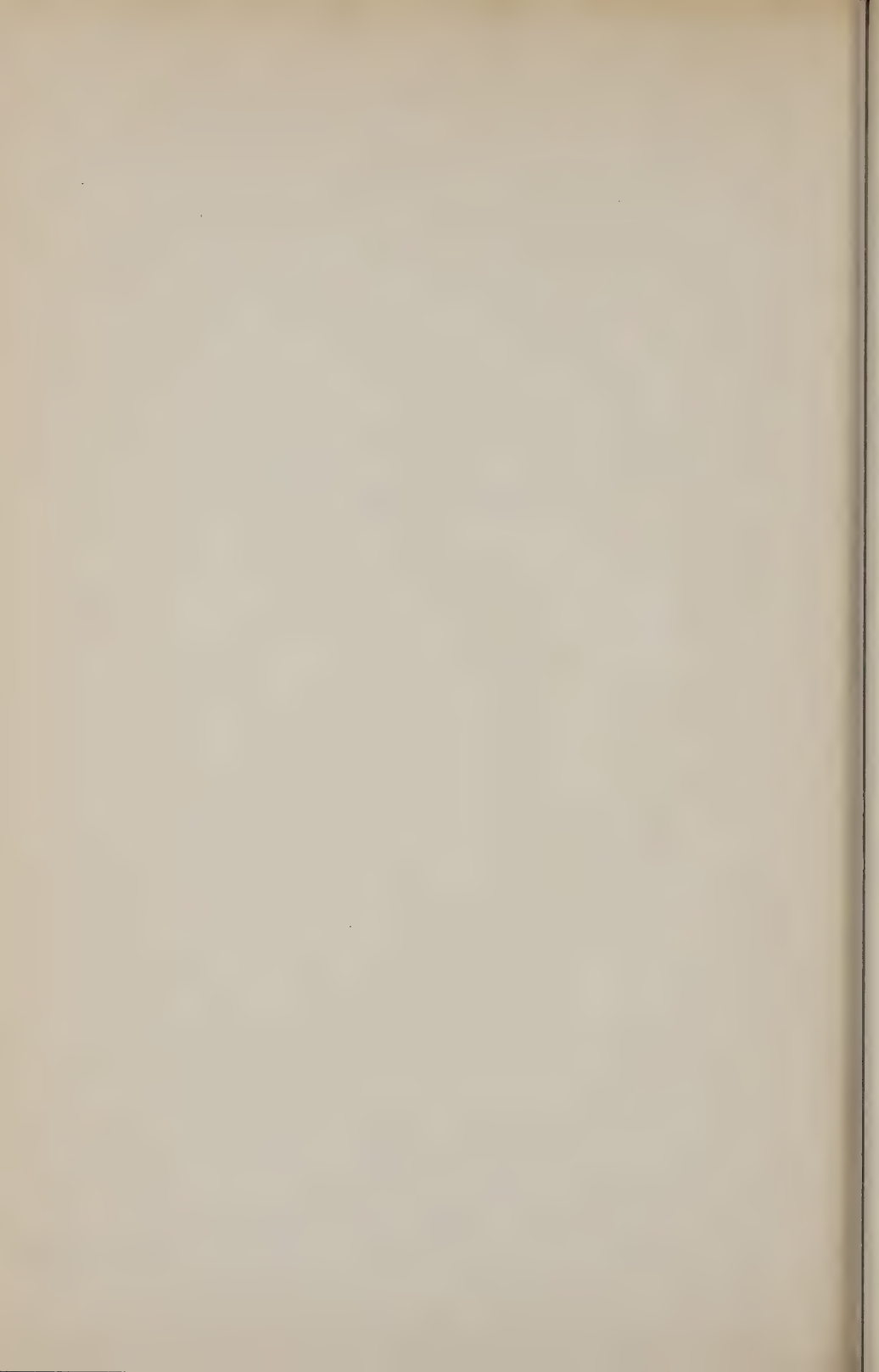
dash past the lone American Cousin, a few steps past Miss Keene and the boy, and a run for his horse which stood saddled in the alley. The plot could not fail.

As a matter of fact, it did not fail. That night John Wilkes Booth shot President Lincoln in Ford's Theatre and successfully made his escape across the Potomac into Virginia.

The drama of Lincoln's death has often been described in word and print to its last detail. Every person directly or indirectly connected with it has had his moment in the spotlight. Yet the one man who has almost been forgotten is the New York dressmaker whose tardiness created the unique opportunity for a tragedy which shook the world and ushered in one of the darkest eras in America's history.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND
BIBLIOGRAPHY



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

WE WISH to express our thanks to the many friends who have helped us in the preparation of this book.

Particularly we thank our manuscript readers, Messrs. A. J. O. Anderson and Fra Angelico Chavez, O.F.M., of Santa Fe, New Mexico; Elmer Gertz, Robert L. Huttner, Alexander J. Isaacs and Ralph G. Newman of Chicago; Stanley F. Horn, Nashville, Tenn.; James W. Holland, Pittsburg Landing, Tenn.; B. C. Yates, Marietta, Georgia; Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Long, Frankfort, Indiana; Miss Harriet Seabrook, Charleston, South Carolina, for their constructive suggestions; and Ruth E. Trantina and Marion Palmer, who have worked with us since the plan for this book came into being.

With special thanks, we also acknowledge the courtesy of Dr. Robert L. Kincaid, and *The Lincoln Herald*, for permission to use portions of the Cahaba story which appeared in that publication, and E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Company of Wilmington, Delaware, for permission to quote from their copyrighted book *Du Pont Romance* by George H. Kerr.

We also wish to commend the services of the staffs of The Chicago Historical Society, The Chicago Public Library and The Newberry Library, as well as other historical societies and libraries in various parts of the country. The assistance given in checking data and following research leads has been invaluable in enabling us to complete the assembling of our material.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, War of the Rebellion, and *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies, War of the Rebellion*: pertinent volumes used throughout.

Additional reading references and source material, by chapters:

CHAPTER I

- Doubleday, Abner. *Reminiscences of Forts Sumter and Moultrie, 1860-1861*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1876.
- Crawford, Samuel Wylie. *The Genesis of the Civil War*. New York: Chas. L. Webster & Co., 1887.
- Nicolay and Hay. *Abraham Lincoln: a History*. New York: The Century Co., 1890.
- Augustin, George. *History of Yellow Fever*. New Orleans, La.: Published for the author by Searcy & Pfaff, Ltd., 1909.
- Executive Documents*. Report of the Secretary of War: 1857-1858—published 1859; 1859-1860—published 1860; 1861-1862—published 1862. Washington: Government Printing Office.

CHAPTER II

- Grant, Ulysses S. *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant*. New York: Chas. L. Webster & Co., 1885, 2 volumes.
- Badeau, Adam. *Military History of Ulysses S. Grant, from April, 1861, to April, 1865*. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1885.
- The Rebellion Record. A Diary of American Events*. Frank Moore, Editor. New York: G. P. Putnam, 1862. Volume III.
- Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*. Edited by Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel. New York: The Century Co., 1884-1888. Vol. I.

CHAPTER III

- Baker, George E., Editor. *The Diplomatic History of the War for the Union: Works of William H. Seward*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin & Co., 1884.
- Bancroft, Frederic. *The Life of William H. Seward*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1900.
- Kerr, George H. *Du Pont Romance*. Wilmington, Delaware. E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Co., Inc. Du Pont Printing Division, 1938. (By permission of E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Co.)
- Elliott, G. F. S. *Chile, Its History and Development*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907.
- Hanson, Earl P. *Chile, Land of Promise*. New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1941.
- Van Gelder, Arthur, and Schlatter, Hugo. *History of the Explosives Industry in America*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1927.
- Rhodes, James Ford. *History of the United States*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1919. Vol. IV.
- Greeley, Horace. *The American Conflict*. Hartford: O. D. Case & Co., 1881.
- Nicolay and Hay. *Abraham Lincoln, a History*. New York: The Century Co., 1890.
- West, Richard S., Jr. *Gideon Welles*. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1943.
- Monaghan, Jay. *Diplomat in Carpet Slippers*. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1945.
- Welles, Gideon. *Lincoln and Seward*. New York: Sheldon and Company, 1874.
- Beale, Howard K., Editor. *The Diary of Edward Bates*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1933.
- Ford, Worthington C. *A Cycle of Adam's Letters, Vol. I*. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1920.

CHAPTER IV

- Blackford, Lt. Col. W. W. *War Years with Jeb Stuart*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1945.

- Garnett, Theodore S. *J. E. B. Stuart—an Address*. New York: Neale Publishing Co., 1907.
- Lee, Fitzhugh. *General Lee*. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1894.
- McClellan, H. B. *Life and Campaigns of Maj. Gen. J. E. B. Stuart*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1885.
- Mosby, John S. *Mosby's Reminiscences and Stuart's Cavalry Campaigns*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1887.
- Price, George F. *Across the Continent with The Fifth Cavalry*. New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1883.
- Thomason, John W. *Jeb Stuart*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930.
- Von Borcke, Heros. *Memoirs of the Confederate War for Independence*. London: Blackwood, 1866, 2 volumes.
- Freeman, Douglas S. *R. E. Lee*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, Vol. II, 1943.
- Freeman, Douglas S. *Lee's Lieutenants*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944. Vol. I.
- Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*. Edited by Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel. New York: The Century Co., 1884-1888. Vol. II.

CHAPTER V

- Hall, Frank. *History of Colorado*. Vol. I. Chicago: Blakely Printing Company, 1889, for Rocky Mountain Historical Society.
- Magoffin, Susan S. *Down the Santa Fe Trail*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926.
- Twitchell, Ralph E. *Leading Facts of New Mexico History*. Cedar Rapids: The Torch Press, 1912.
- Whitford, William Clarke. *Colorado Volunteers in the Civil War*. Denver: State Historical and Natural History Society of Colorado, 1906.
- New Mexico Historical Review*. Historical Society of New Mexico, Santa Fe, N. M. Vol. VI, No. 1.
- Twitchell, Ralph E. *The Conquest of Santa Fe*. Publication No. 24 of Historical Society of New Mexico, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

CHAPTER VI

- Adams, Ephriam Douglass. *Great Britain and the American Civil War*. New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1925. 2 volumes.
- Adams, Henry. *The Education of Henry Adams*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1918. Publication of Massachusetts Historical Society.
- Adams, Charles Francis. *Charles Francis Adams*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1900.
- Bernard, Mountague. *A Historical Account of the Neutrality of Great Britain during the American Civil War*. London: Longmans, Green, Reader & Dyer, 1870.
- Bulloch, James D. *The Secret Service of the Confederate States in Europe*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1884. 2 volumes.
- Dictionary of American Biography*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946.
- Hendrick, Burton J. *Statesmen of the Lost Cause*. New York: Literary Guild, 1939.
- Jordan, Donaldson, and Pratt, Edwin J. *Europe and the American Civil War*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1931.
- Monaghan, Jay. *Diplomat in Carpet Slippers*. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1945.
- Reid, Stuart J. *Lord John Russell*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1885.
- Rhodes, James Ford. *History of the United States*. Vols. III and IV. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1919.
- Russell, Lord John. *Recollections and Suggestions*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1875.
- Welles, Gideon: *The Diary of Gideon Welles*, Vol. I. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1911.
- Walpole, Spencer. *The Life of Lord John Russell*. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1889. 2 volumes.

CHAPTER VII

- Waitt, Colonel Alden H. *Gas Warfare*. New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, Inc., 1942.

The National Archives, Washington: Records of the War Department, Office of the Adjutant General. Special File, Item 26. The letter which Lincoln reads in this chapter may be found in these archives. Everything else is pure fantasy.

CHAPTER VIII

- Boynton, Charles B. *The History of the Navy During the Rebellion*, Volume II. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1868.
- Porter, David D. *Incidents and Anecdotes of the Civil War*. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1886.
- Mahan, A. T. *The Navy in the Civil War, the Gulf and Inland Waters*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1885.
- Porter, David D. *The Naval History of the Civil War*. New York: The Sherman Publishing Co., 1886.
- Scharf, J. T. *History of the Confederate States Navy*. Albany: Joseph McDonough, 1894.
- The History of the Ram Fleet and the Mississippi Marine Brigade in the War for the Union*. Written and published under the auspices of The Society of Survivors. Foreword by Captain Warren D. Crandall and Captain Isaac D. Newell. St. Louis: Buschart Brothers, 1907.
- The Cruise of The "Black Terror,"* by Ensign E. Cort Williams, as published in M.O.L.L.U.S. Ohio Commandery, *Sketches of War History*, Vol. III. Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co., 1890.
- Moore, Frank, Editor. *The Rebellion Record*, Vol. VI and Vol. VII. New York: G. P. Putnam, 1863.

CHAPTER IX

- Bill, Alfred Hoyt. *The Beleaguered City*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946.
- Dowdey, Clifford. *Experiment in Rebellion*. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1946.
- Butler, General B. F. *Butler's Book*. Boston: A. M. Thayer & Co., 1892.

- Butler, General B. F. *Private and Official Correspondence*, Volume III. Norwood, Mass.: Plimpton Press, 1917. (Privately printed.)
- Dictionary of American Biography*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946.
- Sweetser, Kate Dickenson. *Ten American Girls from History*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1917.
- Freeman, Douglas S. *R. E. Lee: a Biography*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935.
- Lee's Dispatches*. Edited by Douglas S. Freeman. New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1915.

CHAPTER X

- Church, William C. *The Life of John Ericsson*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907. 2 volumes.
- Dictionary of American Biography*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946.
- D'Auvergne, Edmund B. *Napoleon the Third*. New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1929.
- Guedalla, Philip. *The Second Empire*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1928.
- Guerard, Albert. *Napoleon III*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1943.
- Orsi, Count. *Recollections of the Last Half Century*. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1881.
- Hamley, General Sir Edward. *The War in the Crimea*. London: Seeley and Company, 1910.
- D'Ambes, Baron. *Intimate Memoirs of Napoleon III*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1912.
- Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*. New York: The Century Co., 1887, Volume I.
- Stevens, William, and Westcott, Allan. *A History of Seapower*. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., 1935.
- Ferguson, Wallace, and Bruun, Geoffrey. *A Survey of European Civilization*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1936.

Clark, George; Stevens, William, and others. *A Short History of the United States Navy*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1910.

CHAPTER XI

- Dowd, Clement. *The Life of Zebulon Vance*. Charlotte, N. C.: Observer Printing and Publishing House of Charlotte, 1897.
- Gilmore, James R. *Personal Recollections of Abraham Lincoln in the Civil War*. Boston: L. C. Page and Co., 1898.
- Hill, D. H., Jr. *North Carolina in the War Between the States*, Volume IV, *Confederate Military History*. Atlanta: Confederate Publishing Co., 1899.
- Holden, W. W. *Memoirs*. John Lawson Monographs of the Trinity College Historical Society, Durham, N. C. Edited by W. K. Boyd, Volume II. 1911.
- Kirkland, E. C. *The Peacemakers of 1864*. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1927.
- Poore, Ben Perley. *The Life and Services of Ambrose E. Burnside*. Providence, R. I.: J. A. and R. A. Reid, Publishers, 1882.
- Sandburg, Carl. *The War Years*, Vol II. New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1936.
- The Outlook*, November 28, 1903, Vol. 75, Number 13. New York: Outlook Company.
- Ashe, S. A. *Biographical History of North Carolina from Colonial Times to the Present*, Volumes II and III. Greensboro, N. C.: C. L. Van Hoppen, 1907.
- Moore, A. B. *Conscription and Conflict in the Confederacy*. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1924.
- Owsley, Frank L. *State Rights in the Confederacy*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1925.
- Lossing, B. J. *Pictorial History of the Civil War in the United States*, Volume III. Hartford: T. Belknap, 1868.
- Atlantic Monthly*. April 1887. (New York.)
- Hill, D. H., Jr. *North Carolina in the War Between the States*, Vol. IV; *Confederate Military History*. Atlanta: Confederate Publishing Co., 1899.

CHAPTER XII

- Banks, R. W. *The Battle of Franklin*. New York: The Neale Publishing Co., 1908.
- Buck, Irving A. *Cleburne and His Command*. New York: The Neale Publishing Co., 1908.
- Clark, Charles T. *Opdycke's Tigers, 125th Ohio Volunteer Infantry*. Columbus, O.: Spahr and Glenn, 1895.
- Cox, Jacob D. *Military Reminiscences of the Civil War*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900.
- Cox, Jacob D. *Battle of Franklin*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1897.
- Hay, Thomas Robson. *Hood's Tennessee Campaign*. New York: Walter Neale Co., 1929.
- Hood, J. B. *Advance and Retreat. Personal Experiences in the United States and Confederate States Armies*. New Orleans: G. T. Beauregard, 1880.
- Schofield, Lt. Gen. John M. *Forty-Six Years in the Army*. New York: The Century Co., 1897.
- Shellenburger, John K. *The Battle of Franklin, Tenn., November 30, 1864*. Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1915.
- M.O.L.L.U.S., Ohio Commandery. *Sketches of War History*, Volume II. Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co., 1888.
- Van Horne, Thomas B. *History of the Army of the Cumberland*. At request of General Thomas. Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co., 1875.
- Field, Henry M. *Bright Skies and Dark Shadows*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1890.
- History of the 36th Regiment, Illinois Volunteers, During the War of the Rebellion*. Bennett, L. G., and Haigh, William M., Aurora, Ill.: Knickerbocker and Hodder, Printers and Binders, 1876.

CHAPTER XIII

- Brewer, Willis. *Alabama, Her History*. Montgomery, Ala.: Barrett and Brown, Printers, 1872.

- Owen, T. M. *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography*, Vol. III. Chicago: Thos. J. Clarke, Publishers, 1921.
- Garrett, William. *Reminiscences of Public Men in Alabama for Thirty Years*. Atlanta: Plantation Publishing Company Press. 1872.
- The Times Journal*. Selma, Alabama. May 29, 1938.
- Hawes, Jesse. *Cababa; A Story of Captive Boys in Blue*. New York: Burr Printing House, 1888.
- State of Alabama. *Department of Archives and History*. Montgomery, Alabama.
- The Birmingham News*. Birmingham, Alabama. Jan. 28, 1930.
- The Montgomery Advertiser*, Montgomery, Alabama. April 13, 1941.
- Selma Morning Reporter*. Selma, Alabama. April 4, 1861; December 30, 1862; January 1, 1863; December 8, 1864.
- Selma Daily Times*. Selma, Alabama. July 6, 1865; December 2, 1865; February 6, 1866; July 3, 1866.
- Fry, Anna M. Gayle. *Memories of Old Cababa*. South Nashville, Tennessee: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1908 (Dallas County).

CHAPTER XIV

- Humphreys, Andrew A. *The Virginia Campaign of 1864 and 1865. Vol. XII of Campaigns of the Civil War*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1883.
- Harrison, Walter. *Pickett's Men*. New York: D. Van Nostrand, Publisher, 1870.
- Pickett, Mrs. LaSalle Corbell. *Pickett and His Men*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1915.
- Southern Historical Society Papers*. Published by Southern Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia. Volumes III, XI and XII.
- Warren, Gouverneur K. *Proceedings, Findings and Opinions of the Court of Inquiry in the Case of Gouverneur K. Warren*. Three Parts. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1883.
- Walker, C. Irvine. *Life of Lieutenant General Richard H. Anderson*. Charleston, S. C.: Art Publishing Company, 1917.

- McCabe, James D., Jr. *Life and Campaigns of General R. E. Lee*. National Publishing Co., Atlanta, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, St. Louis; and Blelock and Company, New York, 1866.
- Taylor, Walter H. *General Lee, His Campaigns in Virginia*. Nussbaum Book News Company, Richmond, Va., 1906.
- Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*. Edited by Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel. New York: The Century Co., 1884-1888. Volume IV.
- Lee, Fitzhugh. *General Lee*. (Great Commanders Series, edited by James Grant Wilson.) New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1894.
- Freeman, Douglas S. *R. E. Lee*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943. Vol. IV Appendix.
- Freeman, Douglas S. *Lee's Lieutenants*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944. Vol. III.

CHAPTER XV

- Jefferson, Joseph. *Autobiography*. New York: The Century Co., 1890.
- Creahan, John. *The Life of Laura Keene*. Philadelphia: The Rodgers Publishing Company, 1897.
- New York Times*. October 19, 1857.
- New York Herald*. October 19, 1857.
- Sothorn, Edward Hugh. *The Melancholy Tale of "Me."* Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916.
- Dictionary of National Biography*. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1908.
- Pemberton, T. C. *A Memoir of Edward Askew Sothorn*. London: R. Bentley and Son, 1889.
- Laughlin, Clara E. *The Death of Lincoln*. New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1909.
- Bullard, F. L. *The Lincoln Herald*. Harrogate, Tenn., February, 1944.



